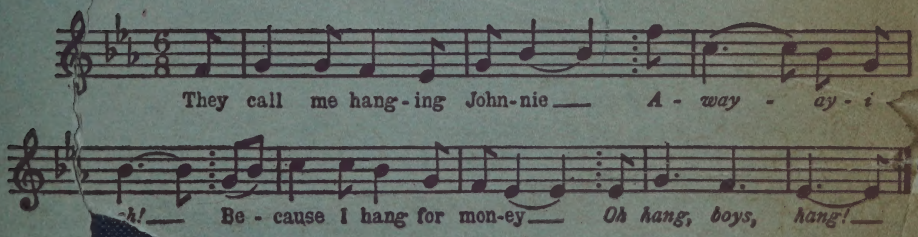
A BOOK OF SHANTIES

C. FOX SMITH

The authentic words and music of the best of the sailor's shanties, together with the history of each song.



$3.00

A BOOK OF FAMOUS SHIPS

By C. Fox Smith

Author of "Sailor Town Days" and "Sea Songs and Ballads"

"No other writer has so vividly depicted the ships and the life of those who sailed in them, or so tellingly recounted their experiences and misadventures, many of which have served as background to fiction. These accounts are not dull extracts from logs, nor are they gilded figments of an inventive mind, but human tales that all can appreciate and understand." — *London Sunday Times.*

"Enthralling stories of such historical vessels as the clipper ship *Lightning*, the American packet *Dreadnought*, the Blackwaller *Newcastle*, the *Thermopylae*, *Cutty Sark*, *City of Agra*, *Cimba*, and *Miltiades*, and of such captains as 'Bully' Forbes, Samuels, le Poer Trench, and Willis. From beginning to end there is not a dull page in the book. Extremely interesting accounts of noteworthy voyages, storms, and wrecks are interspersed with anecdotes and snatches of chanties in such a fascinating way that one is tempted to read straight through to the end without putting the book down." — *London Syren.*

REFERENCE LIBRARY * HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO. * BOSTON, MASS.
Archive
Collection

This book may not leave the Offices
and if borrowed must be returned within 7 days

A BOOK OF SHANTIES

A BOOK OF SHANTIES

BY

C. FOX SMITH

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
1927

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	7
Rio Grande	18
Sally Brown	20
I'm Bound Away	22
The Banks of Sacramento	24
Bound to California	27
Lowlands Away	30
Boney was a Warrior	32
Blow, Boys, Blow	34
Whiskey Johnnie	36
Tom's Gone to Hilo	38
Cheerly Men	40
The Sailor Likes His Bottle	42
Hanging Johnnie	44
Reuben Ranzo	46
Blow the Man Down	49
Billy Riley	52
Roll the Cotton Down	54
Poor Paddy	56
Amsterdam	59
Stormalong	62
The Wide Missouri	64
Can't You Dance the Polka?	67
Across the Rockies	71
Leave Her Johnnie	74
Fare You Well	76
Rolling Home	79
Paddy Doyle's Boots	82
There Goes One	84
Holystoning	85
The Stately Southerner	86
The Rambling Sailor	91

INTRODUCTION

TO those who have been fortunate, or unfortunate, enough to live through the first quarter of this twentieth century, the lot has fallen of seeing pass from this earth—with many other things, some bad, some good, but all alike rendered obsolete by that growth of mechanical invention termed, not always truthfully, Progress—the last, to all intents and purposes, of those innumerable wind-driven argosies which trace their common descent in unbroken line of succession from the first sail—of mat, or bark, or skin, or plaited leaves—which some nameless pioneer in the pale dawn of history spread to the astonished wind. The first sail—what a chapter was that whose opening word was written there! The last sail—how melancholy a sound is in those words—words which it is not impossible to imagine becoming actual and literal truth before this present century is spent!

It is, no doubt, in times like these, an enviable thing to be possessed of that habit of mind which cannot see and be moved by the infinite pathos of such passings: to be able to behold with equanimity, nay, with positive pleasure new skyscrapers rearing their portentous heads over the storied dust of old London—to have no lingering regrets for the jingle of the hansom bell, or the sound, "unforgettable, unforgotten," of hoofs on the wood pavement of Piccadilly on June afternoons when Victoria still sat upon the throne, and the shadow of the Great War had not yet begun to lie across the lives of our unthinking generation—and, finally, to see in the disappearance of the sailing ship no more than the deserved superseding of a method of progression slow, uncertain, and therefore, to a generation whose god is speed, irrevocably and most desirably doomed.

But to those not possessed of that admirably forward-looking temperament the Age of Progress is one saddened by continual partings, in which there remains no longer even the ancient immutability of material things to soften the pangs of life's inevitable flux and change: and in which memory, that precarious and fast-crumbling monument of the past, is scarce to be spared a corner sacred to the neglected ashes it guards, amid the contending streams of the traffic of a restless modernity. To such minds, the past is a thing made the more dear and sacred the more Progress breaks the visible links which bind it to the present: regarded with a tenderness sometimes over-prone to forget its faults and failings, and to put into practice the old tag—"de mortuis"—as well concerning dead years as dead acquaintances. And after all, why not? It is a kindly usage, rooted in the elemental decencies of humanity: and a man who has no good word for the past from whose soil he sprang, seems to me but little better than one who should spit on his grandsire's tomb.

It is, no doubt, very largely from this sentimental affection for the past that there has sprung the amazing—amazing, since until recent years this island people might, for all the interest it appeared to take in its surrounding and protecting element, as well have been set in the Sahara Desert as in Shakespeare's "silver sea"—the amazing vogue for all things connected with bygone ships and sailors. Every kind of nautical "curio" is nowadays eagerly collected: and since, unfortunately, a great many of the collectors add to their praiseworthy enthusiasm a complete ignorance of the technicalities of the subject, the vogue is not without its absurdities.

Ship pictures, even the veriest ship-chandlers' daubs, command in these times fancy prices at auction: the poorest of models, hopelessly out of scale, and often

re-rigged with entire disregard of the period to which they belong, find purchasers at figures which would have made their unlettered makers' eyes bulge out of their heads : the humble bottled ship, once swapped for a pint of beer, reposes in undreamed-of state in the marble halls of the multi-millionaire. And most surprising, perhaps, of all these turns of fortune's wheel is the respect now accorded to the once despised shanty.

Everywhere one goes nowadays one hears shanties—or, as it appears to be, for some unexplicable reason, customary to call them, "sea shanties." I have yet to hear a land shanty : and as for the air shanty, it is still on the knees of the gods, and likely, *pace* Mr. Kipling in "With the Night Mail," to remain there.

The feelings of some hairy shellback of days gone by, if he were to be set down suddenly in a modern concert hall where a highly trained artiste in what he would no doubt term a "b'iled shirt" was giving a strictly bowdlerised rendering of one of his spiciest favourites, may be better imagined than described—very much better, since truth compels the admission that his comments would be in all probability more pointed than polite ; but his astonishment, at any rate, would be beyond question. The average Victorian looked upon shanties, as upon the old songs of the countryside, as exceedingly vulgar, and often "unprintable" songs sung by distinctly undesirable people, socially considered : and their admission to the sedate drawing-rooms of the eighteen-fifties would have seemed a thing unthinkable. Why ! the very crimson silk behind the fretwork lyre on the chaste piano would have blushed a deeper crimson, had the keys consecrate to "The Maiden's Prayer" and "Won't you tell me why, Robin ?" been wakened to such secular and unregenerate strains ! The day had not yet dawned when anything "folk" was regarded as worthy of being reverently "collected" and preserved for the edification of future generations.

Hence, at the very time when shantying was at its best—roughly, between 1850 and 1875—nobody ever thought of noting down either words or music : and there must be scores of shanties which have either been completely lost or survive only in a corrupt and degenerate form. Where are now "Time for us to go" and "Jack Crosstree" and "Nancy oh," all of them mentioned by Dana ? And these must be only a few among hundreds more whose very names are forgotten.

II

Before continuing these remarks any further, it may be as well to come to a clear understanding as to what a shanty really was : since there are still a surprising number of people who persist in regarding "shanty" and "sea song" as synonymous terms.

A shanty, then, is first and last a working song—a rhythmical accompaniment to which the sailing ship seaman performed the various tasks of his working day. Shanties, it cannot be too strongly emphasised, were never sung by sailors for amusement : they were never separated from their appropriate tasks or from the particular form of muscular effort associated with them. It is this fact which in a curious way adds to the difficulty of collecting the words and music, especially of the older shanties. "If I had a capstan bar in my hand," said one old sailor to me (vainly searching the recesses of a failing memory for some once familiar chorus), "I could remember it fast enough !"

When sailors sang for pleasure, they usually preferred either a love song, or a drinking song, or—and on the whole rarely—a sea song (like "The Stately Southerner") which could pass their exceedingly high standard as regarded its

technical correctness. Then there were the interminable " come all yes," such as " The Flash Packet," and broadsides dealing with the crimes of the day. I remember hearing one of the latter sung by a young soldier who had learned it from his father, an East Coast fisherman, and it is interesting as showing the extraordinary tricks oral handing-down plays with the words of songs. This one dealt with a case which caused much popular feeling in the eighteen-seventies—the murder of a ship's boy named Pepper by a brutal mate, who was, I believe hanged for his misdeeds. The song—rendered through the nose with much feeling—described how

" they torched (*sic*) that poor boy in a most cruel way
And give him 'ard biscuit to eat many a day."

and how he

" was cruelly murdered by the skipper and mate
Of a small fishing smack, how sad to relate ! "

The chorus ran as follows :—

" He 'as gone to that land where no sorrows doth moan,
He 'as gone with poor Pepper who ofttimes did roam,
'E once was the pride of 'is pore mother's joy :
Oh 'ow sad was the fate of that poor fisher boy ! "

But to return to the shanties—these are roughly divisible into two large general classes—firstly, the capstan or windlass, and pumping shanties, which are usually interchangeable, and secondly halliard shanties, or those which were sung hauling on a rope. Generally speaking, though the rule does not invariably apply, the songs belonging to the first class are more elaborate in structure, especially as regards the chorus. " Amsterdam " is a good example of this point. The hauling shanties are as a rule simpler in construction, and have a one line refrain, strongly emphasised where the big pull comes in. There are also subdivisions—short drag, long drag, and " hand-over-hand " shanties they are sometimes termed—and there are one or two well-known shanties which are in a class by themselves—*e.g.*, " Paddy Doyle's Boots," used for heaving a rolled-up sail on to the yard in furling.

The shanty man used to be chosen from among the crew for his good voice and extensive repertoire, and he was excused a good deal of " pully hauly " by virtue of his office. He usually stood by and sang the solo part ; in the case of an anchor shanty his post was sometimes on the knightheads, sometimes on the capstan itself. Later, however, when crews became smaller, and every man had to pull every ounce that was in him and a bit to spare, such a luxury as a shantyman in the old sense of the word was dispensed with, and the singer had to heave and haul with the rest. In hauling his position was generally on the leading part of the tackle, the crowd " tailing on" to the fall after it had passed through a block on deck.

III

What a number of vexed questions there are concerning the shanty! Here we have a type of song which was, up to half a century ago or less, the current coin of what the jargon of the present day terms a " key industry." Every sailor and a great many landsmen who had made sea voyages must have known shanties : yet no one really seems to have known anything *about* them ; where the words came from, where the music came from, even where the name came from.

This last-named point will be found debated in most of the books which have been written on the subject ; but not in any case, it seems to me, quite conclusively.

First, as to the spelling. Among sailors the word has generally been spelt as pronounced—" shanty "—and therefore, seeing that the shanty itself is the sailor's own property, it seems only fair that he should have the say in the spelling of it. But that is not to say that he is etymologically correct. Plenty of old shellbacks invariably said " Shannadore " when they meant " Shenandoah "—just as nine out of ten of them spoke of " Vallaparaiso " or " Vallipo " when they meant Valparaiso. I find the recognised authorities fairly evenly divided between " s " and " c." Mr. John Masefield, the late J. E. Patterson, and (curiously enough, in view of the fact that he had nigger on the brain) the late F. T. Bullen, all practical seamen, have " chanty " or " chantey " ! Whall and Dr. Terry have " shanty." There is also in favour of the latter spelling the important point that it indicates the right pronunciation.

Admitted, then, that we may as well spell the word " shanty." Have we any etymological reason for doing so ?

Here again we have two possible answers, both of which have their supporters among the experts, though the division, as I have just remarked, does not, as one would expect it to do, follow that of the spelling.

One theory derives the word from the French verb " chanter " ; a derivation which has the fault of being so obvious that one at once thinks it is probably incorrect. But the points in its favour are, as a matter of fact, by no means to be despised. The usual arguments advanced against it are, briefly, that " chanter " is a verb, and " shanty " a noun : hence, that to call a shanty a " chanter " would be equivalent to calling a song a " sing " ; and secondly, that there is no good reason why a foreign word—especially one borrowed from, at that time, a hereditary enemy—should have been chosen to express something for which a perfectly good English equivalent exists.

Against the first of these it may be argued that " shanty " is, in point of fact, a verb as well as a noun, and that the imperative of the French verb might have been very easily rendered " shanty it up." It would be interesting to know whether French nautical literature contains any evidence of such a usage. On the second count, the sailor has always rather taken a pleasure than otherwise in using foreign words and phrases picked up in his wanderings—doubtless with a view to impressing less travelled folk ; and more than one French word will be found incorporated in the argot of the sea. Take, for instance, the word " matlow," from the French " matelot," which is still in quite common use in the Royal Navy : " jaunty," for a ship's corporal, which almost certainly comes from " gendarme " ; " timoneer," a term used by Falconer for a helmsman, from the French "timonnier." One might multiply examples ad libitum, and, indeed, recent history suggests that the habit of appropriating words from an enemy's vocabulary is by no means confined to the sailorman—witness the almost loving use of " strafe " and " kamerad " on the Western front.

It may be added that the form of some of the shanties is by no means unlike that of many of the French " voyageur " songs, or the old *chansons*—a single line solo with an intervening chorus—but against this must be set in fairness the fact that the same argument might be adduced to derive the shanty from practically every form of primitive song under the sun.

So much, then, for the " chanty " or " chantey " case. Now let us glance at the etymological whys and wherefores of the alternative spelling—" shanty."

These, again, may briefly be summarised as follows :—

" Shanty," in negro parlance, signifies a hut : and it is, or was the habit in the West Indies, when a change of residence was indicated, to move your house along with you, much as a hen house might be moved in this country. While the house was being moved, one man sat upon the roof, and sang a song with a chorus in which those men harnessed to the ropes which pulled the house along joined. Hence—" shanty."

Now, on the face of it, there seems to be reason in this theory, since the circumstances, broadly speaking, bear a considerable resemblance to those in which the sailor's work songs were sung. A closer consideration, however, discloses more than one serious objection.

Firstly, there is the rather obvious argument that a song is not a building. It might be absurd to call a song a " sing " ; it would be equally, if not more so, to call it a house. One does not call a song a " pub " or a " bar " or a " music hall " because it is sung in such a place : nor does one call a hymn a " church " or a " chapel " ; why, then, call a song a " shanty " because it is sung in or on a shanty ? Why, again, call it a shanty because it is sung while moving a shanty ? It has never, so far as I know, been suggested that a shanty should be called an anchor or a pump, or a yard or a four-fold purchase ; yet there would be quite as much reason for such a proceeding.

The truth is that I don't believe in either of the theories here dealt with : nor have I any other to advance in their stead. It may be that the word " shanty "—like the thing it signifies—simply " growed."

IV

And that brings up still another vexed question—where *did* the shanty—words and music—come from ?

A good many people regard the great bulk of the shanties—like the word itself —as of negroid origin, derived chiefly from the house-moving operation just referred to. Now, this theory, let me say at once, and that in face of a considerable body of expert opinion, is one with which I cannot bring myself to agree.

It has always been the habit of seafaring men to lighten their labours with a song. I do not think it has ever been suggested that the boatmen of the Volga went to the negroes of the West Indies to learn to sing : or the trackers on the Hwang-ho, or even the Venetian gondolier. Why, then, should it be considered probable that the English sailor—whose race was known throughout Europe four centuries ago as the " singing English "—should have followed the sea mutely until a West Indian negro showed him how to use his voice ? It is as least as likely that the West Indian negro, when moving a wooden hut, adapted for the purpose a hauling shanty picked up from the seafaring community, and that the fact of the object moved being called a shanty was mere coincidence, as that the whole great mercantile marine of England learned to sing out on a rope from a gang of niggers in Antigua.

The usual argument put forward in favour of the negroid derivation is the structure typical of the shanty—the solo part with a regularly recurring refrain, as in

" Whiskey is the life of man—
Whiskey, Johnnie ! "

which, incidentally, dates back, according to some authorities, some four centuries ; that is, before Sir John Hawkins had laid the foundation stone of the trade in black ivory and hence of the negro population in the West Indies !

This structure, we are told, is precisely that found in all negro songs, both on the plantations of the New World and in the black man's native continent. No doubt it is—only, unfortunately for the convincingness of the theory, it is also typical of practically every kind of primitive verse form in the world.

The African negro may have been in the habit of singing—

" Give flesh to the hyenas at daybreak—
Oh the broad spears ! "

just as the English folk singer

" There were three ravens sat on a tree—
With a down, down, derry, derry down ! "

and the Scottish minstrel

" She sat down below a thorn—
Fine flowers in the valley ! "

for there is, in point of fact, no literature which cannot show examples of what Professor Ker has called " the old tricks of repetition, found all over the world wherever poets are not too high-minded or artificial."

That is not to say that many of the shanties are not definitely " nigger." It would be strange if they were not : for, as it happens, a considerable number of those which survive belong to the mid-nineteenth century, when a flood of nigger minstrelry had poured over the land, and it was by no means necessary to go to the West Indies to find it. Even so essentially English an institution as the Morris dance did not escape the popular vogue of the " minstrel," and the tune of " Dance, the boatman dance " found its way permanently into the repertoire of some of the Lancashire Morris men. Had the shanty survived to the present day, would it, I wonder, have been infected by the modern mania for " jazz " rhythm : and should we have heard—horrible thought !—topsails hoisted to the strains of " Alexander's rag-time band," " Yes, sah, dat's ma honey," or some such noble and inspiring melody ?

V

In this instance, I am in the pleasant position of having a theory of my own to advance in place of that I have taken the liberty of disputing.

The shanty, it seems to me, differs in one very important aspect from the majority of folk songs : for whereas in the latter the words usually came first and the tune afterwards, it is fairly obvious that in the case of the shanty the exact opposite must have been the case. Nobody, it stands to reason, would have been likely to make up such trivial doggerel as the words of most of the shanties and then compose beautiful and haunting melodies to accompany them.

Assuming then, as I think we may, that the tunes were in many cases there first, the question now arises—where did these tunes come from ? It is not necessary to go far in search of a very natural and, indeed, obvious source.

In many of the King's ships during the first half of the nineteenth century, and in practically all the ships of the East India Company and their successors, the Blackwall frigates, there was borne on the books a very notable functionary —namely, the ship's fiddler, the direct successor of the "musick" to which references abound in the records of early voyages and sea fights. This fiddler's principal duty was to play appropriate tunes when the anchor was being hove and on other important occasions; in fact, he was the immediate forerunner of the shantyman. Some of Green's ships also carried a piper and a fifer, but I have not been able to learn precisely when their talents came into operation.

A fiddler was still carried by some of the smaller sailing craft of the Royal Navy until comparatively recent times. Commander G. S. Bowles, R.N., has favoured me with a description of one of these functionaries who was attached to a brig on the West Indian station in the 1890's He was emphatically a gentleman of colour: and he sported a resplendent uniform, which sounds decidedly like that worn by an organ grinder's monkey, including as it did a red coat and a round cap with "a button on top" like that of the Great Panjandrum himself. Thus arrayed, he would stand on the capstan-head when the anchor was weighed, and the great game was to get fiddler and capstan and all to revolve together.

Now here, it appears to me, we have a source whence might be drawn an inexhaustible supply of tunes, suitable to the purpose of the shantyman, and known to the majority of sailormen, to which, lacking the presence of the fiddler himself, words would readily be fitted. An analogy may be found in the doggerel and, be it said, often exceedingly "unprintable," words fitted by marching regiments to their favourite tunes when the band is silent: the Manchester Regiment's

"Why did I go to Ashton, boys,
Why did I join the Army?"

and the Loyal North Lancashire's

"I feel no pain, dear mother, now,
But oh, I am so dry!
Oh take me to a brewery
And leave me there to die"—

sung, of course, to the regimental march tune, "My love is like a red, red rose," are cases in point.

The following concrete example distinctly seems to point to the fiddler as the source of shanty tunes. In Green's "Blackwall," at the time of the Crimean War, one very favourite stave for a heavy pull consisted of the following words—

"England, old Ireland,
England, old Ireland,
England, old Ireland,
Rumpsty—bumpsty—haul!"

This went to a swinging snatch of melody from the Huntsmen's Chorus in "Der Freischütz." Now, it is not likely that the ship's company of an East Indiaman would spend their leisure ashore in listening to operas: but it is very likely that the fiddler might play scraps from operas, which would thus become familiar to the men as good tunes to fit to a job of work.

The fiddler departed ; but the shantyman remained, his memory stored with all kinds of tunes appropriate to the labour of the pump and capstan, the long haul, the sweat-up, the " hand-over-hand," the stamp-and-go, in short, every kind of sailorizing job imaginable. Country dance tunes, song tunes, bits of classical music, even hymn tunes, reels, jigs, Gaelic croons, Irish rebel ballads : all came to the fiddler's net and thence passed to the shantyman's.

And into all these heterogeneous scraps of melody, gathered from so many and such various sources, there crept, blending them into one harmonious whole, the very sound and soul of the sea : so that in the shanty we have the true artistic self-expression of the sailorman, all the more genuine because of its complete lack of that element of self-consciousness which disfigures so much sophisticated artistic utterance.

The words of the shanties are, with few exceptions, very far below the level of the music. Sometimes they are exceedingly coarse, though, for my part, I believe this coarseness has been on the whole very much exaggerated. It is a tradition handed down from an amazingly mealy-mouthed period, which regarded the mildest of " cuss-words " as something for " the ladies " to faint about. But they are certainly in many cases extremely trivial and even meaningless. Occasionally there are flashes of surprising beauty in some odd phrase or scrap of rhythm : " Lowlands away," " Stormalong," and so on. But the general rule is a sort of patchwork of stereotyped formulae and catchwords, like

" I thought I heard the old man say "—
" We're homeward bound this very day "—
" Oh you santy "—
" Up aloft this yard must go "—
" Another pull and then belay."—

and so on. Rather an interesting gloss on the last-quoted line is the statement of an old sailor that it was by way of a hint to the mate that the watch had had enough sweating up, and that if he didn't cry " Hold enough," or in other words, " belay," there was a chance that they might pull so vigorously as to fetch the yard out of the slings. " An' we would 'ave did, too ! "

VI

I do not think many people will be found to dispute the fact that it is well worth while to preserve the shanties ; such of them, that is, as are still left for us to preserve. Historically, sentimentally and æsthetically, they are among the things which those who value tradition will not willingly let die.

A few words, however, may not be amiss regarding the right way to revive the shanty. And in this connection, let me briefly describe a painful experience of my own as to how *not* to do it. It was at a music hall which shall be nameless. The curtain rose, revealing one of those impossible stage inns—made of creeper and green trellis at sevenpence-ha'penny a lineal foot—called " The Jolly Tar," or something equally improbable. Outside this preposterous establishment were seated at a small table three large mariners, whose costume—an artistic blend of jerseys, seaboots, cheesecutter and stocking caps—suggested that they had been making an indiscriminate raid on the slop chest at the Sailors' Home. Quoth one of these worthies to another : " Let's have a tchahntey ! " and amid encouraging

cries of " A tchahntey—yes, a tchahntey ! " the individual addressed rose, and, with a wealth of dramatic gesture, laying aside his churchwarden pipe, sang—well, I just forget what he did sing ! It was too painful to listen to !

And oh, you who revive shanties, for the love o' Mike leave out the toy capstan business ! As the sergeant-major said when he saw the squad form fours for the first time, " It's not a bit like it ! " Strong men have wept to see such things done : murmuring the while in voices broken with emotion that they wished they had that blank-blank crowd in a watch in the old This-That-or-the-Other, in order that they might perform the interesting nautical operation of knocking eight bells out of them.

But, such flights of fancy apart, landsmen who sing shanties—and in this I think most old sailormen will bear me out—sing them far too fast. Why, I do not know, unless it be one of the effects of that curious shore convention of the " jollity " of the sailor. As a matter of fact, the outstanding thing about most of the shanties is their melancholy, and to sing them, as is often done, as fast as a hornpipe, is completely to spoil both their character and their beauty.

In these days a piano accompaniment is inevitable in most cases, that instrument being the one most generally available. Strictly speaking, however, shanties are really best sung unaccompanied ; or, if possible, the fiddle, concertina, or even the humble mouth organ are more in the picture than the piano. I remember hearing a most excellent rendering on the wireless from Bournemouth, with a concertina accompaniment : the player being, I think, a lady. The whole thing was admirable : time, manner and words exactly right, with none of that " just like the real thing " air which is so intensely irritating, and generally so entirely *un*like what it is intended to reproduce.

VII

Recent years have witnessed the appearance of so large a mass of books concerning the shanty that some apology is perhaps necessary for adding to their number. Large though it is, however, the literature of the subject is still far from complete, and should this volume contain but one scrap of information which is not available elsewhere, it may be considered, I hope, to have justified its existence. I have had the good fortune to come across one or two shanties which are not included in any other published collection, and variants of others which have seemed to me worth noting. In most cases I give only the airs ; but Mr. Eric Mareo, who has given me most valuable assistance in the musical direction, has provided a piano accompaniment for a few, chiefly those new to print.

The usual arrangement, namely, grouping all the capstan shanties and all the halliard shanties together, always seems to me somewhat lacking in variety : and I have therefore begun and ended with a few appropriate anchor songs, and mingled the remainder indiscriminately, much as might happen during a voyage. The words will be found to require a little juggling in places to make them fit the airs. The reader will have to (as the old lady said when she knitted stockings without heels) " shap' 'em out for himsel'."

As regards the words, I have ventured here and there to play the shantyman myself, to the extent of introducing a few obvious improvements in rhyme and rhythm such as, it appeared to me, might occur to any fairly versatile improviser. But for the rest, I have been content to leave Sailor John's songs as he knew them —the songs that lightened his labour, that cheered him when he was cold and hungry and weary with long striving with the gales and seas—and that have now been blown clean away for ever down the winds of time.

A BOOK OF SHANTIES

RIO GRANDE

(CAPSTAN SHANTY)

This, with "Blow the Man Down," is probably the most generally known of all the shanties, both ashore and afloat.

I find that the air is practically identical in nearly all the collections: Bullen's version shows the most variation, but then Bullen was a shantyman himself and seems in many cases to have availed himself of his shantyman's licence to adapt both music and words to his own liking.

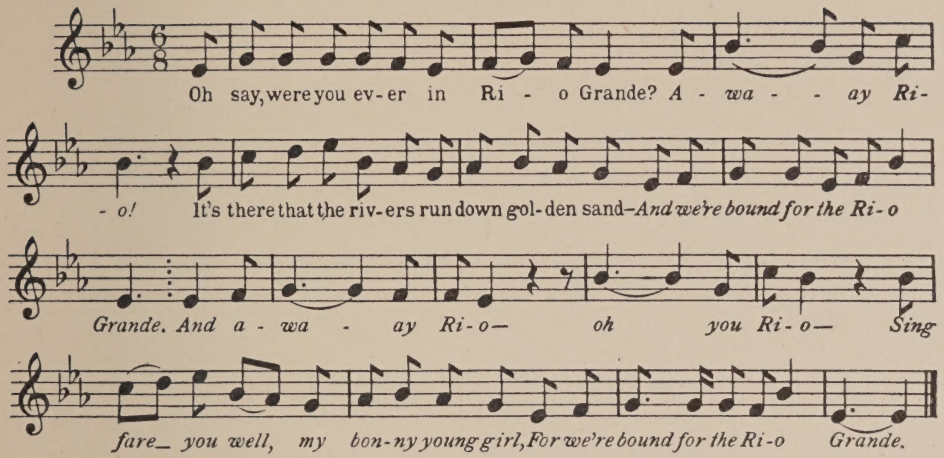
The words, on the other hand, vary a good deal. Sometimes "The Fishes" was used to this tune: sometimes the old song "Where are you going to, my pretty maid?" Bullen gives "Oh Captain, oh Captain, heave your ship to, For I have got letters to send home by you"—recalling the days when a chance meeting with a passing vessel afforded the only opportunity for many months of communication with home and friends. The accepted version, however, is—with slight variations—generally on the lines of that which I give.

The identity of the "Rio Grande" referred to affords ground for some interesting speculation.

The reference to the rivers which "run down golden sand" rather suggests the Mexican Rio Grande: but the gold discoveries there were not made until the 'sixties, and the shanty was, I believe, known long before that date. There seems, then, just a possibility that it may go back to the eighteenth century, when crowds of gold-seekers were flocking to the south of Brazil: in which case it must be one of the oldest of the shanties.

And oh! one word, please! "Ry-o," *not* "Ree-o" —and "Grande" to rhyme with "sand."

RIO GRANDE


Oh say, were you ev-er in Ri - o Grande? A - wa - - ay Ri-
- o! It's there that the riv-ers run down gol-den sand–And we're bound for the Ri-o
Grande. And a - wa - ay Ri-o— oh you Ri-o— Sing
fare_ you well, my bon-ny young girl, For we're bound for the Ri-o Grande.

Oh say, were you ever in Rio Grande ?—
Awa-ay Rio !
It's there that the rivers run down golden sand—
And we're bound for the Rio Grande.
And awa-ay Rio—oh you Rio—
Sing fa-are you well, my bonny young girl,
For we're bound for the Rio Grande.

So pack up your donkey and get under way—
Awa-ay Rio !
The girls we are leaving can have our half-pay,
And we're bound for the Rio Grande.
And awa-ay Rio—oh you Rio—
Sing fa-are you well, my bonny young girl,
For we're bound for the Rio Grande.

You Liverpool ladies, we'd have you to know,
Awa-ay Rio !
We're bound to the South'ard, oh Lord let us go !
For we're bound for the Rio Grande.
And awa-ay Rio—oh you Rio—
Sing fa-are you well, my bonny young girl,
For we're bound for the Rio Grande.

And now fare you well, all you girls of the town,
Awa-ay Rio !
The pay we have left you will buy a silk gown—
And we're bound for the Rio Grande.
And awa-ay Rio—oh you Rio—
Sing fa-are you well, my bonny young girl,
For we're bound for the Rio Grande.

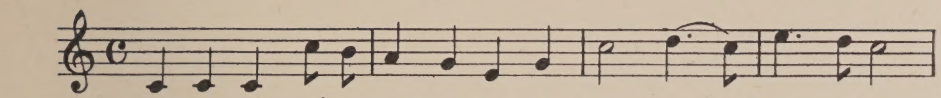
SALLY BROWN

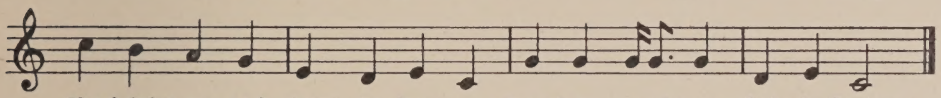
(CAPSTAN SHANTY)

Neither the words nor the music of "Sally Brown" call for much comment. It was usually sung when getting up the anchor; in Mr. Cecil Sharp's collection it is given as a hauling shanty, but I have never come across a sailor who had heard it so used. Quite possibly Mr. Sharp's informant, who was most likely a very old man, may have been mistaken, or Mr. Sharp himself, who had, comparatively speaking, no nautical knowledge, may have misunderstood him.

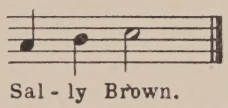
Every sailor knew "Sally Brown." The words seldom varied much, and the only noteworthy variation I find in the air is in the concluding bar.

SALLY BROWN





Some shanty men used to sing the last bar:—



Sally Brown she's a bright mulatto—
Way-ay, roll and go!
She drinks rum and chews tobacco—
Spend my money on Sally Brown!

Sally Brown she's a Creole lady—
Way-ay, roll and go!
I guess she's got a nigger baby—
Spend my money on Sally Brown!

For seven years I courted Sally—
Way-ay, roll and go!
She said, "Oh boy, why do you dally!"
Spend my money on Sally Brown!

The sweetest flower of the valley—
Way-ay, roll and go!
Is my dear girl, my pretty Sally—
Spend my money on Sally Brown!

For seven years she wouldn't marry—
Way-ay, roll and go!
I said, "I will no longer tarry"—
Spend my money on Sally Brown!

So off I sailed across the water—
Way-ay, roll and go!
And now I'm courting Sally's daughter—
Spend my money on Sally Brown!

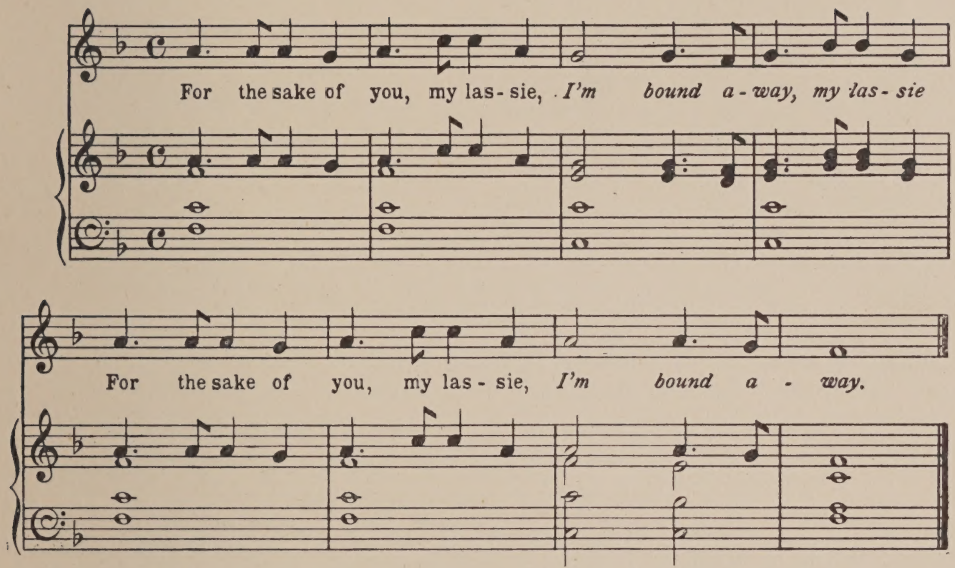
I'M BOUND AWAY

(CAPSTAN SHANTY)

This rather pretty little anchor song, which I think does not appear in any other collection, dates back to the early 'fifties, when it was a favourite in ships outward bound from the London River. "It used," said my informant, "to sound peculiarly pathetic when one knew the circumstances—the men who were singing it had probably wasted a year's hard-earned pay in a few days ashore, and were leaving home perhaps for years, penniless and full of the feelings of depression and despair left behind when the drink was just out of them."

The words seem to indicate that it may have been originally an emigrant song. The first verse only is traditional: the friend from whom I had it could remember no more. I have taken the liberty of acting as shanty-man for once and improvising a couple more to make more of a song of it.

I'M BOUND AWAY



For the sake of you, my lassie,
I'm bound away, my lassie,
For the sake of you, my lassie,
I'm bound away.

Far across the sea, my lassie,
I'm bound away, my lassie,
Far across the sea, my lassie,
I'm bound away.

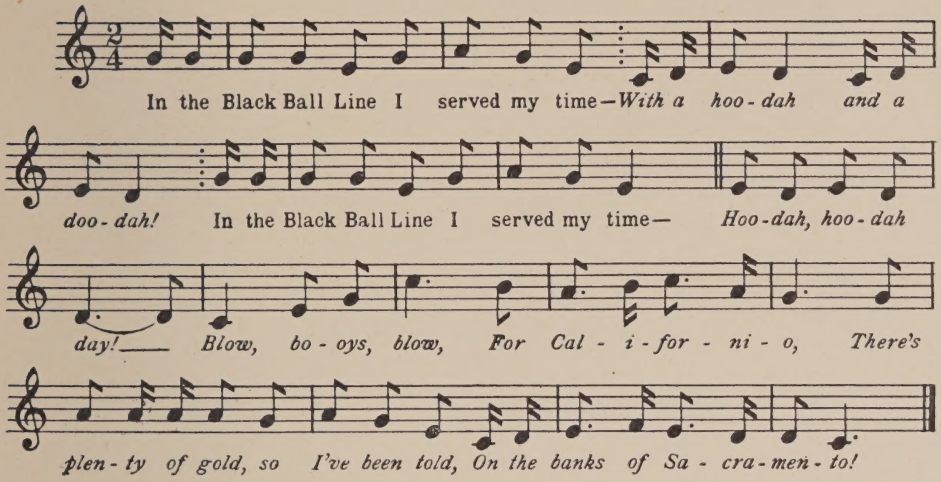
Gold to win for you, my lassie,
I'm bound away, my lassie,
Gold to win for you, my lassie,
I'm bound away.

THE BANKS OF SACRAMENTO

(CAPSTAN SHANTY)

The tune of this shanty is identical with that of the well-known minstrel song, "Camptown Races," from which it is generally concluded that it was derived. But there seems just a shade of doubt as to which version is really the older. "The Banks of Sacramento" must have been written at the time of the California gold rush in 1849, and "Camptown Races" appears to have been composed at about the same time. It is certainly curious that a quite new set of words—and very good words too—should have been so promptly fitted to the chorus of "Camptown Races," while it was itself still a new song. The shantyman, whoever he may have been, who was responsible, must have been a crackerjack at his job. The words, apart from the chorus, vary considerably: I have picked out some of the best, but they don't amount to a great deal. The chorus is the thing.

THE BANKS OF SACRAMENTO


In the Black Ball Line I served my time—With a hoo-dah and a
doo-dah! In the Black Ball Line I served my time— Hoo-dah, hoo-dah
day! Blow, bo-oys, blow, For Cal-i-for-ni-o, There's
plen-ty of gold, so I've been told, On the banks of Sa-cra-men-to!

In the Black Ball Line I served my time—
With a hoodah and a doodah!
In the Black Ball Line I served my time—
Hoodah, hoodah day!
Blow, bo-oys, blow,
For Californi-o!
There's plenty of gold, so I've been told,
On the banks of Sacramento!

We were the boys to make her go—
With a hoodah and a doodah!
Around Cape Stiff in frost and snow—
Hoodah, hoodah, day!
Blow, bo-oys, blow,
For Californi-o!
There's plenty of gold, so I've been told,
On the banks of Sacramento!

Around Cape Stiff in seventy days—
With a hoodah and a doodah!
Around Cape Stiff is a very long way
Hoodah, hoodah, day!
Blow, bo-oys, blow,
For Californi-o!
There's plenty of gold, so I've been told,
On the banks of Sacramento!

BOUND TO CALIFORNIA

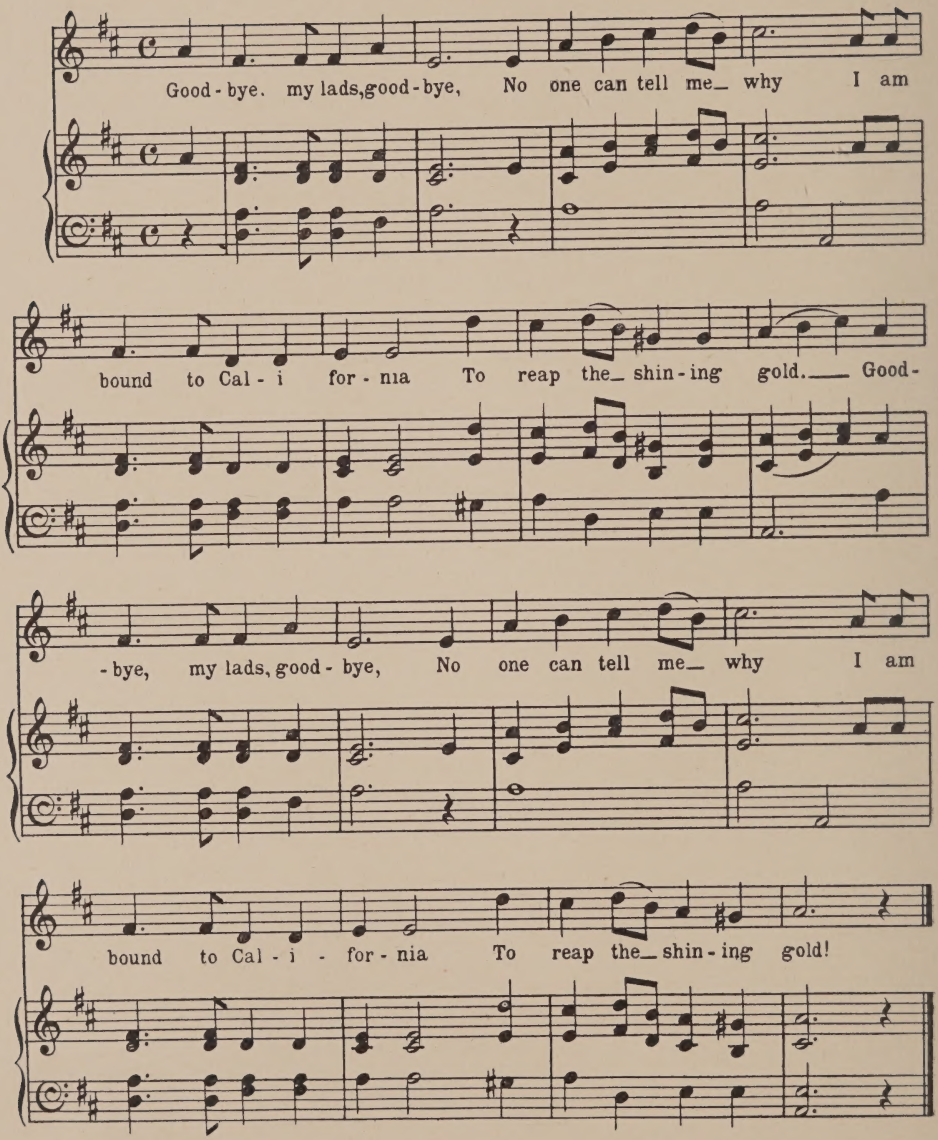
(CAPSTAN SHANTY)

This shanty, of course, also refers to the California gold rush of the eighteen forties and fifties. I have not seen it in any other collection.

Captain J. L. Vivian Millett, from whom I had it, remembers hearing it sung at Algoa Bay, in the days when the anchorage off that port was still crowded with sailing ships. A big vessel was just getting up her anchor; she had a good shanty crowd, and the chorus roared out by a score of voices came over the waters of the open roadstead with an unforgettable effect.

Captain Millett could only give me the chorus: perhaps someone who reads this may be moved to recollection of the solo part.

BOUND TO CALIFORNIA


Good-bye, my lads, good-bye, No one can tell me why I am
bound to Cal-i for-nia To reap the shin-ing gold. Good-
-bye, my lads, good-bye, No one can tell me why I am
bound to Cal-i-for-nia To reap the shin-ing gold!

BOUND TO CALIFORNIA

Good-bye, my lads, good-bye,
No one can tell me why
I am bound to California
To reap the shining gold!
Good-bye, my lads, good-bye,
No one can tell me why
I am bound to California
To reap the shining gold!

LOWLANDS AWAY

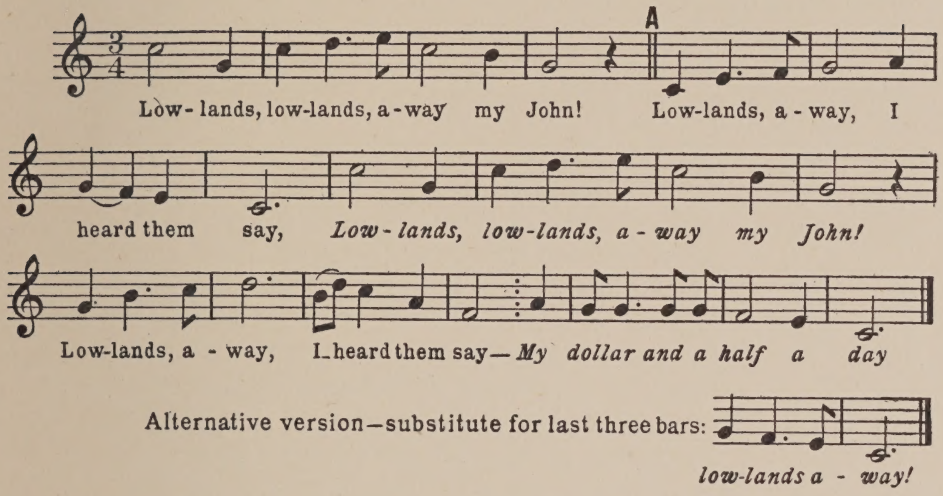
(HALLIARD SHANTY)

"Lowlands away" is the classic example of one of the outstanding characteristics of the shanty; namely, the way in which the most trivial and indeed meaningless words are wedded to haunting and beautiful melodies.

The more modern words—not that they are really very modern, since they were already well-known in the 'fifties and practically extinct before the 'eighties, very few of the younger generation of sailing ship men having ever heard the shanty—are a debased version of a still older song. The horribly material refrain of "A dollar and a half a day," which is so hopelessly out of keeping with the sad, lingering cadence of the melody, and the references to "hoosiers" and such strange wildfowl, are quite obviously later interpolations. The old version is on the familiar theme of the dead lover, so popular with the folk singer, to whom and to whose audiences a thoroughly miserable story was as the breath of life; and the "Lowlands" refrain is found in more than one old song and ballad, like the well-known "Golden Vanitee," and that which tells how

"the Lowlands of Holland
Have twined my Love and me."

LOWLANDS AWAY


A
Low-lands, low-lands, a-way my John! Low-lands, a-way, I
heard them say, Low-lands, low-lands, a-way my John!
Low-lands, a-way, I heard them say— My dollar and a half a day
Alternative version—substitute for last three bars:
low-lands a-way!

Lowlands, lowlands, away my John !
Lowlands away, I heard them say,
Lowlands, lowlands, away my John !
Lowlands away, I heard them say—
My dollar and a half a day !

A dollar a day is a hoosier's pay—
Lowlands, lowlands, away my John !
A dollar a day is a hoosier's pay—
My dollar and a half a day !

Oh my old mother wrote to me—
Lowlands, lowlands, away my John !
She wrote to me to come home from sea
My dollar and a half a day !

Lowlands, away, I heard them say—
Lowlands, lowlands, away my John !
Lowlands away, I heard them say—
My dollar and a half a day !

ALTERNATIVE VERSION (*beginning at A*)

I dreamed a dream the other night—
Lowlands, lowlands, away my John !
I dreamed a dream the other night—
My lowlands away !

I thought I saw my own true love—
Lowlands, lowlands, away my John !
I thought I saw my own true love—
My lowlands away !

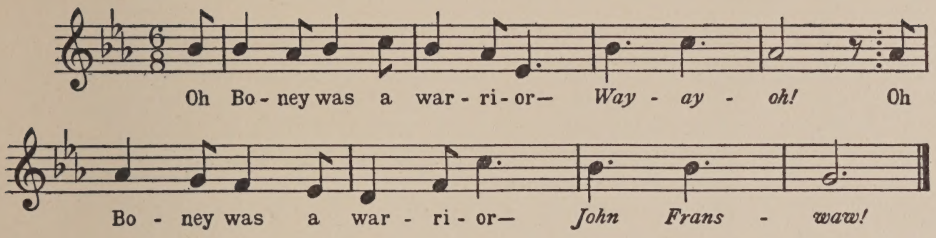
I thought my love was drowned and dead—
Lowlands, lowlands, away my John !
I thought my love was drowned and dead—
My lowlands away !

BONEY WAS A WARRIOR

(HALLIARD SHANTY)

Some authorities define the time-honoured ditty of " Boney " as the sailor's " generous tribute to a defeated foe." Of course, it would be very nice if such were the case, but I am inclined to doubt it. The sentiment seems rather too high-falutin' for an age which had not developed tolerance to the pitch it has attained at the present day, or learned to win a war only to make the enemy a free gift of the peace. It strikes me as far more likely that the shanty was to a certain extent writ sarcastic. As for the tune, we had rather a habit of borrowing from our opponents in those days in such matters as the build of frigates, which may quite conceivably have been put into practice here. The ironical humour of the proceeding would have been exactly calculated to appeal to the sailorman of the period.

BONEY WAS A WARRIOR



Oh Boney was a warrior—
Way-ay-oh !
Oh Boney was a warrior—
John Frans-waw !

First he fought the Rooshians—
Way-ay-oh !
And then he fought the Prooshians—
John Frans-waw !

Moscow was a-burning—
Way-ay-oh !
A-blazing and a burning—
John Frans-waw !

He went to Saint Helena—
Way-ay-oh !
He broke his heart and died there—
John Frans-waw !

Oh Boney was a warrior—
Way-ay-oh !
Oh Boney was a warrior—
John Frans-waw !

BLOW, BOYS, BLOW

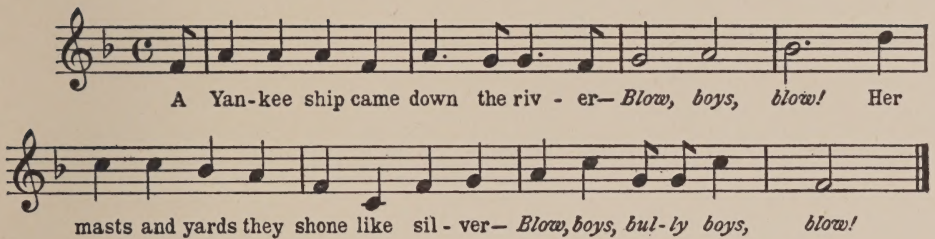
(HALLIARD SHANTY)

This shanty is said to have referred originally to the slave trade, and some versions give a number of stanzas in which the Congo River is mentioned. Latterly, however, it has been taken as applying to the hard-driven, beautifully kept ships which hailed from Down East, with skippers and mates whose brutality was only equalled by their daring and skilful seamanship.

The names of the skipper and mate varied, as the cookery books say, "to taste." Sometimes Captain Semmes of the "Alabama" figured as captain, and no doubt the redoubtable Bob Waterman would have done so if his name had been a syllable shorter. Generally, though, it was Bully Hayes who held command—that legendary, piratical super-blackbirder of the South Seas, the memory of whose exploits still lingers among the islands. Bully Hayes, like a good many of his type, seems to have been, in what may literally be described as civil life, one of the mildest-mannered men that ever slit a throat: not long ago I had a letter from a lady who spent her youth in Australia, and cherished the fearful recollection of having as a child sat on that celebrated ruffian's knee!

Shanghai Brown is, of course, the famous or infamous 'Frisco crimp who figures as Shanghai Smith in Mr. Morley Roberts's nautical classic, "The Promotion of the Admiral."

BLOW, BOYS, BLOW



A Yankee ship came down the river—
Blow, boys, blow!
Her masts and yards they shone like silver—
Blow, boys, bully boys, blow!

And who do you think was skipper of her?
Blow, boys, blow!
Why, Bully Hayes, him and no other!
Blow, boys, bully boys, blow!

And who do you think was chief mate of her?
Blow, boys, blow!
Why, Shanghai Brown, the sailor robber!
Blow, boys, bully boys, blow!

And what do you think they got for their dinner?
Blow, boys, blow!
Why, handspike hash, as I'm a sinner!
Blow, boys, bully boys, blow!

And what do you think they got for their suppers?
Blow, boys, blow!
Belaying pin soup and a roll in the scuppers—
Blow, boys, bully boys, blow!

Oh blow my boys and blow for ever!
Blow, boys, blow!
And blow her home to the London River!
Blow, boys, bully boys, blow!

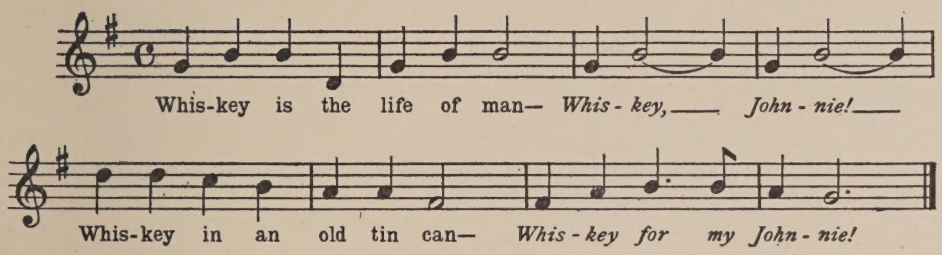
WHISKEY JOHNNIE

(HALLIARD SHANTY)

"Whiskey Johnnie" was another universal favourite, for which some authorities claim a respectable antiquity, asserting, I know not on what grounds, that it was originally "malmsey" which had the deleterious effects outlined by the shantyman.

To the best of my belief, nobody has ever been able to give chapter and verse in support of the statement: but if it be true, it is certainly valuable evidence of the fact that the phenomenon of the sun being over the foreyard was by no means unknown even in the days of the Tudors.

WHISKEY JOHNNIE



Whiskey is the life of man—
Whiskey, Johnnie!
Whiskey in an old tin can—
Whiskey for my Johnnie!

Whiskey here and whiskey there—
Whiskey, Johnnie!
Whiskey almost everywhere—
Whiskey for my Johnnie!

Whiskey gave me this red nose—
Whiskey, Johnnie!
Whiskey made me pawn my clo'es--
Whiskey for my Johnnie!

Whiskey made the old man say—
Whiskey, Johnnie!
" Another pull, and then belay."
Whiskey for my Johnnie!

Whiskey is the life of man—
Whiskey, Johnnie!
Whiskey in an old tin can—
Whiskey for my Johnnie!

TOM'S GONE TO HILO

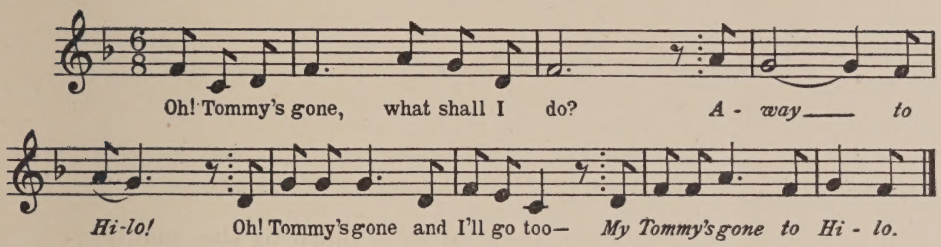
(HALLIARD SHANTY)

The Odyssey of Tom—or John—was always a favourite: it afforded plenty of scope for improvisation on the part of a fluent shantyman.

One version makes quite a romance of his wanderings—" he never kissed his girl good-bye," and so on: but I suspect this of being rather a " made-up " affair. It lacks the real shanty touch, and especially the note of good-humoured irony regarding affairs of the heart.

The great game was to take Tom the round of all the ports you could remember without getting stuck for a rhyme.

TOM'S GONE TO HILO



Oh Tommy's gone, what shall I do ?
Away to Hilo !
Tommy's gone and I'll go too—
My Tom's gone to Hilo.

Tommy's gone to Mobile Bay—
Away to Hilo !
In a packet ship the other day—
My Tom's gone to Hilo !

Tommy's gone to Baltimore—
Away to Hilo !
A-dancing on that sandy floor—
My Tom's gone to Hilo !

Tommy's gone to Vallipo—
Away to Hilo !
When he'll come back I do not know—
My Tom's gone to Hilo !

Tommy's gone up to Quebec—
Away to Hilo !
A-stowing timber on the deck—
My Tom's gone to Hilo !

Tommy's gone to Pernambuck—
Away to Hilo !
Tommy's gone and I wish him luck—
My Tom's gone to Hilo !

Oh, Tommy's gone, what shall I do ?
Away to Hilo !
Tommy's gone and I'll go too—
My Tom's gone to Hilo !

CHEERLY MEN

(HALLIARD SHANTY)

This is one of those shanties regarding which collectors are wont to drop such dark hints as to the "unprintable nature" of its words, that one might think the mere mention of it in a mixed gathering would be calculated to bring a blush to the manly cheek of the embarrassed sailorman.

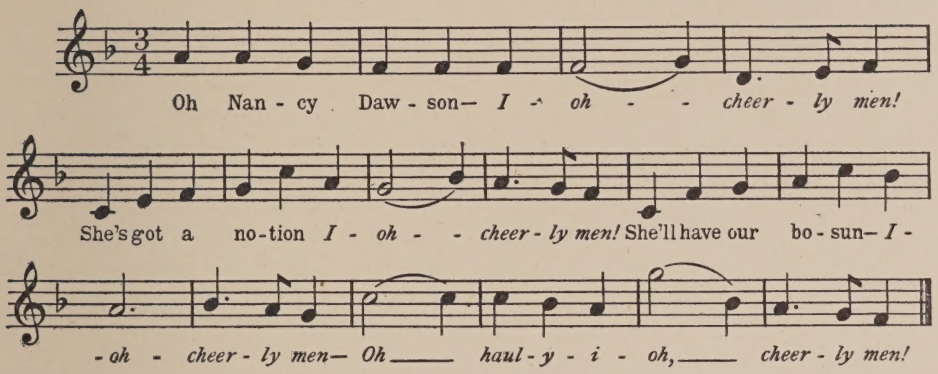
In point of fact, as is very often the case, its Rabelaisian character has probably been very unnecessarily emphasised. No doubt there *were* dirty words sung to it, but not always. The fact that it was sung in the passenger ships of John Company, and, later, of Green and Wigram, proves it beyond a doubt, since indecent shantying was always taboo in the presence of passengers. In this view I am confirmed by Mr. Ridley James, who often heard it sung as a midshipman in Green's ships.

The tune is one which lends itself very readily to improvisation, and any little happening which took the fancy of the crew was liable to be embodied in it by the shantyman—sometimes in rather embarrassing fashion. On one occasion, for example, a young woman passenger named Kate had been noticeably "éprise" with one of the officers. Imagine her confusion when she came on deck one day in time to hear the topsail being mastheaded to the strains of

"Oh pretty Kate
She loves our mate—
O-illi-i-o-cheerly men!"

This is probably a very old shanty; it is certainly one of the most primitive of all, being only one stage further developed than the "strange wild cries" of the men hauling on the ropes alluded to by Dana.

CHEERLY MEN


Oh Nan - cy Daw - son— I - oh - - cheer - ly men!
She's got a no-tion I - oh - - cheer - ly men! She'll have our bo - sun— I -
- oh - cheer - ly men— Oh haul - y - i - oh, cheer - ly men!

Oh Nancy Dawson—
I-oh-cheerly men !
She's got a notion—
I-oh-cheerly men !
She'll have our bosun—
I-oh-cheerly men !
Oh hauly-i-oh, cheerly men !

Oh pretty Kate—
I-oh-cheerly men !
She likes our mate—
I-oh-cheerly-men !
Early and late—
I-oh-cheerly men !
Oh hauly-i-oh, cheerly men !

Haul all together—
I-oh-cheerly men !
Haul for good weather—
I-oh-cheerly men !
Oh now belay there !
I-oh-cheerly men !
Oh, hauly-i-oh, cheerly men !

SAILOR LIKES HIS BOTTLE

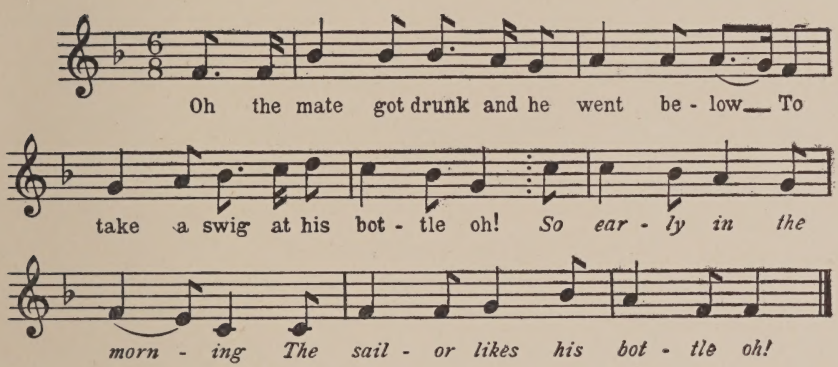
(HALLIARD SHANTY)

This must be a real old stager. It was sung in the Blackwallers three quarters of a century ago, but it was probably an old song then. I have never come across a modern sailing ship man who knew it.

There is a version in Mr. Sharp's collection and another in Ferris and Tozer, both differing slightly from that given here. The tune is very like that of a nursery song I remember delighting in as a child, which recounted, regardless of entomological probability, that—

" Fiddle-de-dee, fiddle-de-dee,
The fly has married the humble-bee ! "

SAILOR LIKES HIS BOTTLE



Oh the mate got drunk and he went below
To take a swig at his bottle oh !
So early in the morning
The sailor likes his bottle oh !

A bottle of wine and a bottle of beer
And a bottle of Irish whiskey oh.
So early in the morning
The sailor likes his bottle oh !

HANGING JOHNNIE

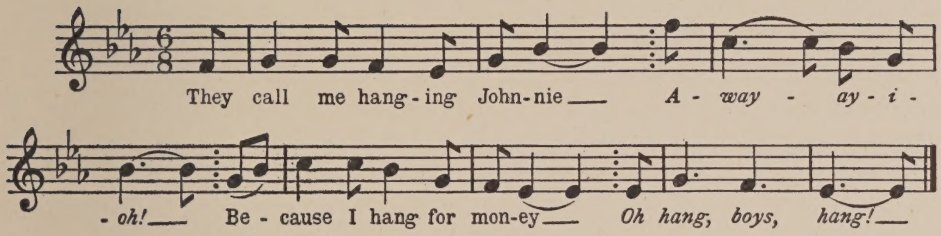
(HALLIARD SHANTY)

Both the air and the words of "Hanging Johnnie" (concerning which Mr. John Masefield has a fine descriptive passage) have a curiously haunting quality of almost macabre irony which is not found in any other shanty.

It was a general favourite, I think, in most ships, and survived to the end of the sail era.

Was the original "Hanging Johnnie" actually Jack Ketch? It is quite possible, and if so the date of the shanty may be fixed within a few years.

HANGING JOHNNIE



They call me Hanging Johnnie—
Away-ay-i-oh!
Because I hang for money—
Oh hang, boys, hang!

Oh first I hanged my mother—
Away-ay-i-oh!
And then I hanged my brother—
Oh hang, boys, hang!

A rope, a beam, a ladder—
Away-ay-i-oh!
I'll hang you all together—
Oh hang, boys, hang!

REUBEN RANZO

(HALLIARD SHANTY)

" Simpson, did yer say your name was ? Well, now, I was shipmates once with a bloke name o' Simpson ; only 'e 'ad a wooden leg an' a boss eye, an' come to think of it 'is name warn't Simpson, it was 'Iggins. If that ain't a bloomin' coincidence, wot is ? "

This example of nautical inconsequence is very much on the same lines as the theory which identifies the hero of the shanty of " Reuben Ranzo " with a Danish national hero of the sixteenth century named Daniel Rantzau. To begin with, the worthy in question was not called Reuben : further, he does not appear to have shipped in a whaler : further, he was not a tailor : nor does there appear to be any historical evidence in support of the statement that he ever received lashes five-and-thirty to teach him the value of cleanliness.

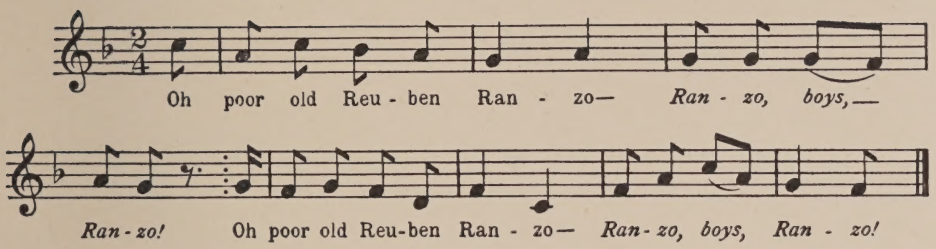
But who really *was* Reuben Ranzo ?

The obvious answer is that he was a " Dago," by name Lorenzo, a view to which the description of his personal habits lends likelihood. But then obvious solutions are seldom correct, as careful perusal of detective fiction effectually demonstrates, and a closer consideration suggests several objections to this one. In the first place, Reuben isn't a Dago name at all : and secondly, who ever heard of a Dago tailor ? If he had been an ice-cream merchant or an organ grinder, now—but a tailor, no ! My own private idea is that Ranzo was one of the small and select band, of which the Marquess of Reading is the most eminent representative, of Jews afloat. He may have been a Russian or Polish Jew named Ronzoff or something of the kind, in which case he would very likely be a tailor, and the fact of his presence in the whaler would be sufficiently remarkable to be worth making a shanty about. It may also be observed that he displays the characteristic national tendency to get on in the world.

Whalers, of course, were particularly giving to shipping lubbers of all sorts, and the point is worth noting that Reuben (or Rube, especially in conjunction with the patronymic Hayseed) is an American generic term for a greenhorn or new chum.

Anyhow, whoever and whatever Reuben Ranzo may have been, his name will endure as long as the shanty which celebrates his misfortunes and never was topsail yard hoisted to a more rousing chorus !

REUBEN RANZO



Oh poor old Reuben Ranzo—
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

Oh poor old Reuben Ranzo—
Ranzo, bo-oys, Ranzo!

Oh Ranzo was a tailor—
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

Oh Ranzo was no sailor—
Ranzo, bo-oys, Ranzo!

Oh, Ranzo was a tailor—
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

He shipped on board a whaler—
Ranzo, bo-oys, Ranzo!

Oh Ranzo took a notion—
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

To sail upon the ocean—
Ranzo, bo-oys, Ranzo!

He shipped on board the "Beauty"—
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

And did not know his duty—
Ranzo, bo-oys, Ranzo!

They set him holystoning—
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

And did not mind him groaning—
Ranzo, bo-oys, Ranzo!

They said he was a lubber—
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

And made him eat whale-blubber—
Ranzo, bo-oys, Ranzo!

They gave him lashes twenty—
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

He thought it more than plenty—
Ranzo, bo-oys, Ranzo!

The captain gave him whisky—
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

Which made him rather frisky—
Ranzo, bo-oys, Ranzo!

He taught him navigating—
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

And gave him extra rating—
Ranzo, bo-oys, Ranzo!

He made him the best sailor—
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

Sailing in that whaler—
Ranzo, bo-oys, Ranzo!

Ranzo now is skipper—
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

Of a China clipper—
Ranzo, bo-oys, Ranzo!

BLOW THE MAN DOWN

(HALLIARD SHANTY)

" Blow the Man Down " well deserves its wide popularity. It has a fine swing and go about it, and must have been a rare good tune to make a job of work go the better.

I remember an old sailorman's description of the first time he heard this shanty sung. It was on board one of De Wolf's big Liverpool ships, just leaving port —the crew, of course, still suffering from considerably what temperance orators would no doubt call " the effects of the previous night's debauch," and feeling distinctly languid in consequence. The mate—a great lanky Bluenose with hands like sledge-hammers and feet like yards—started up " Blow the Man Down ! " The effect was magical. You just had to laugh ! He had that half dead crowd in a good humour in next to no time, and up went those topsail yards in fine style.

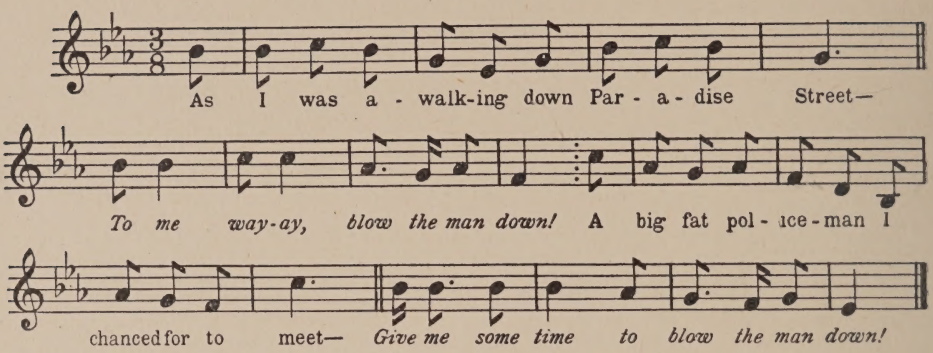
There are several recognized sets of words, of which I give three in full. Version One—the same which made that Liverpool crew grin—refers, of course, to the celebrated Black Ball Line of packets sailing out of Liverpool. This is essentially a Liverpool shanty, though individual shantymen have frequently adapted the words to fit their own particular trade or port of register. Thus Sir Richard Terry's East Coast version has " Winchester Street " for " Paradise Street," and a London shantyman would give Ratcliff Highway as the name of the thoroughfare where the encounter took place with the big fat policeman or (in Version Two) the spanking fine gal.

Version Three really belongs to another shanty altogether, that of " The Fishes," with the refrain " Stormy weather—windy weather—when the wind blows pull all together," familiar to readers of Kipling's " Captain Courageous."

In addition to these three, there are many other sets of words known. One old sailor told me they used to sing " Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall "—" any sort of rubbish so long as it fitted the tune," was the way he put it.

The air and the refrain, on the other hand, seldom varied at all. The latter bears a striking resemblance to the German carol " Stille Nacht, heil'ge Nacht," which may be accidental, or may quite possibly be an example of the picking up of a tune from emigrants. The packet ships carried hundreds of Germans to the United States, and what is more likely than that they should sing their national songs and hymns to while away the tedium of the voyage and so add to the sailor's repertoire ?

BLOW THE MAN DOWN


As I was a - walk-ing down Par - a - dise Street—
To me way-ay, blow the man down! A big fat pol - ice - man I
chanced for to meet— Give me some time to blow the man down!

First Version—

As I was a-walking down Paradise Street—
To me, way-ay, blow the man down !
A big fat policeman I chanced for to meet—
Give me some time to blow the man down !

Says he, " You're a Black Baller by the cut of your hair,"
To me way-ay, blow the man down !
" I know you're a Black Baller by the togs that you wear "—
Give me some time to blow the man down !

" You sail in a packet that flies the Black Ball "—
To me way-ay, blow the man down !
" You've robbed a poor Dutchman of sea chest and all "—
Give me some time to blow the man down !

" Oh p'leeceman, oh p'leeceman, you do me much wrong—
To me way-ay, blow the man down !
" I'm a flying fish sailor just home from Hong Kong "—
Give me some time to blow the man down !

I spat in his face and I gave him some jaw—
To me way-ay, blow the man down !
Says he, " Now, young feller, you're breaking the law "—
Give me some time to blow the man down !

So they gave me three months all in Liverpool town—
To me way-ay, blow the man down !
For fighting a p'leeceman and blowing him down—
Give me some time to blow the man down !

I'll give you this warning afore we belay—
To me way-ay, blow the man down !
Steer clear of policemen, you'll find it will pay—
Give me some time to blow the man down !

BLOW THE MAN DOWN

SECOND VERSION—

Oh blow the man down, bullies, blow him right down—
To me way-ay, blow the man down !
Oh blow the man down, bullies, blow him away—
Give us some time to blow the man down !

As I was a-walking down Paradise Street
A spanking fine gal there I chanced for to meet.
This spanking fine gal then she said unto me :
" There's a dandy full-rigger just ready for sea."

That dandy full-rigger to Sydney was bound—
She was very well rigged and very well found.
But as soon as the clipper was clear of the Bar
The mate knocked me down with the end of a spar.

And as soon as the clipper was well out to sea
I'd cruel bad treatment of every degree.
So I'll give you this warning afore we belay—
To me way-ay, blow the man down—
Don't take it for gospel what spanking gals say—
Give us some time to blow the man down !

THIRD VERSION—

Oh a ship she was fitted out ready for sea—
To me way-ay, blow the man down !
And fishes she had for her ship's companee—
Give us some time to blow the man down !

First came the eel with his slippery tail,
He said, " I'll lay aloft and shake out every sail."
Next came the lobster with his prickly back,
He said, " I'll go for'ard and board the foretack."

Next came the codfish with his chucklehead,
He jumped in the chains and was heaving the lead.
Next came the flounder that lies on the ground,
Saying, " Damn your eyes, chucklehead, mind where you sound."
Last came the herring, the king of the sea,
Saying, " Haul in your headsheets, now, hellum's a-lee ! "

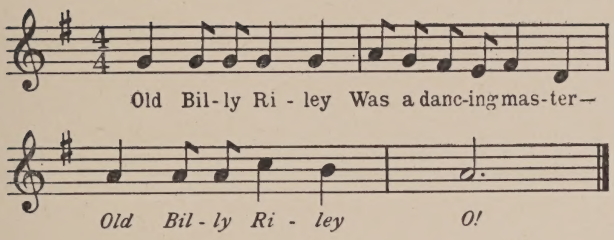
BILLY RILEY

(HALLIARD SHANTY)

This very jolly little shanty is one of the real old stagers, and I have come across very few of the younger generation of sailormen who have heard it. This version was sung in Green's "Blackwall" in the eighteen-fifties. I find it in only one other collection—that of the late Mr. Cecil Sharp.

A "drogher" was, of course, a West Indian trader in the sugar trade: the term was later applied also to timber ships. Its etymology I do not know, but it is probably Dutch.

BILLY RILEY



Old Billy Riley
Was a dancing master—
Old Billy Riley O !

Old Billy Riley
Was master of a drogher,
Old Billy Riley O !

Master of a drogher
Sailing to Antigua,
Old Billy Riley O !

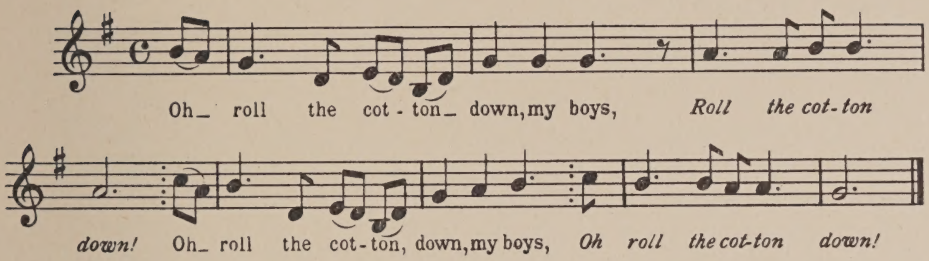
ROLL THE COTTON DOWN

(HALLIARD SHANTY)

Why was the shantyman so enamoured of Mobile Bay? Possibly because of the sound of it; possibly because it fitted in well with the usual shanty rhythms. There must have been some such reason: otherwise why should the name of a comparatively unimportant place appear in the shanties more frequently than any other? It is one of the minor puzzles of the subject.

"Roll the Cotton Down" is a jolly little tune which deserves a wider popularity among the shanty revivalists than it has so far enjoyed.

ROLL THE COTTON DOWN



Oh roll the cotton down, my boys,
Roll the cotton down !
Oh roll the cotton down, my boys,
Oh roll the cotton down !

Oh once we lay in Mobile Bay—
Roll the cotton down !
Oh once we lay in Mobile Bay—
Oh roll the cotton down !

A dollar a day is a negro's pay—
Roll the cotton down !
A dollar a day is a negro's pay—
Oh roll the cotton down !

Two dollars a day is a white man's pay—
Roll the cotton down !
Two dollars a day is a white man's pay—
Oh roll the cotton down !

I thought I heard the old man say—
Roll the cotton down !
" Another pull and then belay ! "
Oh roll the cotton down !

POOR PADDY

(PUMPING OR CAPSTAN SHANTY)

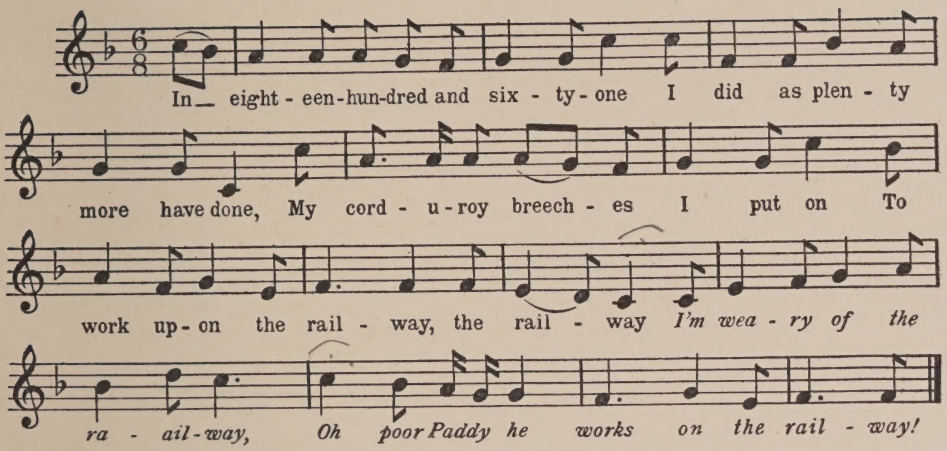
The MS. magazine of the "Young Australia"—of James Baines's Black Ball Line of Liverpool clippers—outward bound from London to Moreton Bay in 1864, contains the following reference to this shanty, together with a pen-and-ink drawing of the men working the brake pumps with the shantyman standing by.

"The conductor, generally a tall thin man with a loud voice and a large collection of songs, begins the solo, and the men who are working vigorously at the pump join with all their might and main in the spirited chorus. We might mention as peculiar amongst the other strange songs which we hear, one which we think must be called "Pat's Apprenticeship," as it goes through the history of a number of years during which "poor Paddy works on the railway." What becomes of him eventually we have not yet been able to discover, but we suppose that the line is not yet finished."

This is no doubt an example of a shore song converted into a shanty, and for that reason some of the purists exclude it from their pages. But since—as I have suggested elsewhere—the likelihood is that nearly every shanty under the sun, if the truth were known, comes under the same category, and since, moreover, "Poor Paddy" has certainly been long forgotten *except* as a shanty, and has been for years a universal favourite afloat, I take leave to accord a place here to his Odyssey.

Captain W. H. Angel calls it a hoisting shanty: but every other writer I have consulted classes it with the capstan songs, and its form seems to indicate that it was so used as a general rule.

POOR PADDY


In eight - een-hun-dred and six - ty - one I did as plen - ty
more have done, My cord - u - roy breech - es I put on To
work up - on the rail - way, the rail - way *I'm wea - ry of the*
ra - ail - way, Oh poor Paddy he works on the rail - way!

In eighteen-hundred-and-sixty-one
I did as plenty more have done,
My corduroy breeches I put on
To work upon the railway . . . the
ra-ailway . . .
I'm weary of the ra-ailway,
Oh poor Paddy he works on the railway!

In eighteen-hundred-and-sixty-two
I joined up with an Irish crew,
I got a job of work to do,
To work upon the railway . . . the
ra-ailway . . .
I'm weary of the ra-ailway,
Oh poor Paddy he works on the railway!

In eighteen-hundred-and-sixty-three
I sailed away across the sea,
I sailed to North Amerikee
To work upon the railway . . . the
ra-ailway . . .
I'm weary of the ra-ailway,
Oh poor Paddy he works on the railway!

In eighteen-hundred-and-sixty-four
I landed on Columbia's shore,
I had a pickaxe, nothing more,
To work upon the railway . . . the
ra-ailway . . .
I'm weary of the ra-ailway,
Oh poor Paddy he works on the railway!

In eighteen-hundred-and-sixty-five
When Daniel O'Connell was alive,
I thought it time no more to strive
To work upon the railway . . . the
ra-ailway . . .
I'm weary of the ra-ailway,
Oh poor Paddy he works on the railway!

In eighteen-hundred-and-sixty-six
I said good-bye to spade and picks,
I chucked my job and carried bricks
But not upon the railway . . . the
ra-ailway . . .
I'm weary of the ra-ailway,
Oh poor Paddy he works on the railway!

AMSTERDAM

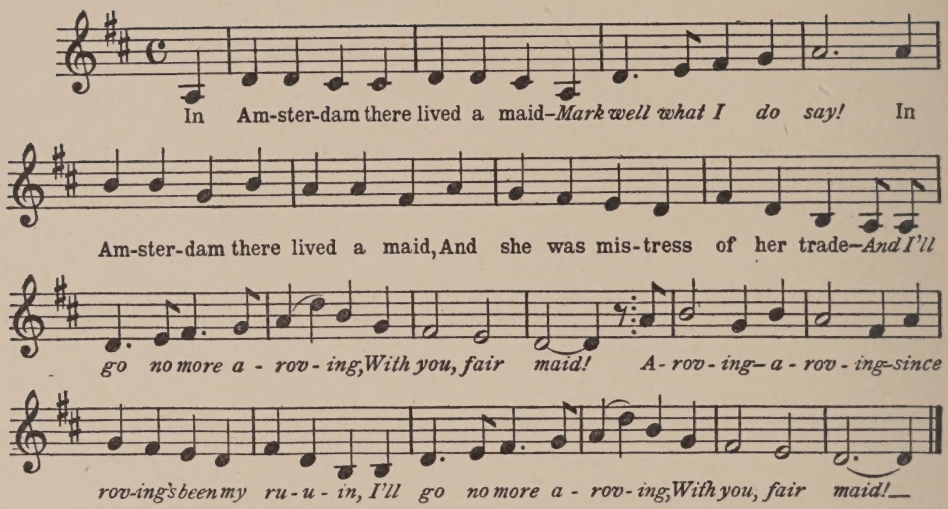
(CAPSTAN SHANTY)

It is given to the shanty of the "Maid of Amsterdam" to bridge as no other does the centuries of our nautical history. It appears, as everyone knows, in "The Rape of Lucrece," by the Elizabethan dramatist, Thomas Heywood: but it no more follows that Heywood wrote it than that Shakespeare wrote all the scraps of traditional song which are scattered through his plays. The probability is that it existed as an anchor song long before it occurred to Heywood to make use of it.

And in this twentieth century of ours Mr. Hill, who was shantyman until he left the sea, in one of the last survivors of the days of sail, the steel barque "William Mitchell," reckoned "Amsterdam" as one of the best things in his repertoire.

It has a fine swinging tune and a rousing chorus: and the words have an obvious appeal for the sailorman alike of Elizabeth's and Victoria's day. Fair maids of the Amsterdam type change little through the centuries, whether they be found in the Lowlands low or in Ratcliff Highway.

AMSTERDAM


In Am-ster-dam there lived a maid–*Mark well what I do say!* In
Am-ster-dam there lived a maid, And she was mis-tress of her trade–*And I'll*
go no more a - rov - ing, With you, fair maid! A - rov - ing– a - rov - ing-since
rov-ing's been my ru - u - in, I'll go no more a - rov - ing, With you, fair maid!

AMSTERDAM

In Amsterdam there lived a maid—
Mark well what I do say!
In Amsterdam there lived a maid,
And she was mistress of her trade—
And I'll go no more a-roving
With you, fair maid!
A-roving—a-roving—since roving's been my ru-u-in,
I'll go no more a-roving
With you, fair maid!

Her cheeks were red, her eyes were brown—
Mark well what I do say!
Her cheeks were red, her eyes were brown,
Her hair in ringlets hanging down,
And I'll go no more a-roving,
With you, fair maid!

I put my arm around her waist—
Mark well what I do say!
I put my arm around her waist,
Says she, "Young man, you're in great haste"—
And I'll go no more a-roving,
With you, fair maid!

I took that girl upon my knee—
Mark well what I do say!
I took that girl upon my knee,
She said, "Young man, you're rather free"—
And I'll go no more a-roving,
With you, fair maid!

But when I'd blowed my twelve months' pay—
Mark well what I do say!
But when I'd blowed my twelve months' pay
That girl she vanished clean away—
And I'll go no more a-roving
With you, fair maid!
A-roving, a-roving, since roving's been my ru-u-in,
I'll go no more a-roving
With you, fair maid!

STORMALONG

(PUMPING AND CAPSTAN SHANTY)

The sea has its own gallery of mythological personages, and very likely students of comparative folklore would be able to trace many of them back to some common source before the Aryan invasion of Europe. There is Davy Jones, for example, who may quite conceivably be some kind of a blood relation of the Celtic Manannan, himself near akin to Poseidon and Neptune. Mother Carey, too, who, according to some authorities, should be called Mrs. Jones if everyone had their rights, is probably what " folk " jargon would call a variant of the Siren myth, or of any other similar legend embodying a fair (or foul) lady with a penchant for sailors' bones, very far removed from the " Mater Cara " whence her name is probably derived.

And who was " Old Stormey," hero of many a shanty ? An embodiment of the storm-wind itself, so some surmise. Others again see in him a sort of canonised skipper—the ideal " Old Man "—who will

" give his shellbacks lots of rum."

He must have been a person of some substance, too : for, says the shanty,

" I wish I was old Stormy's son—
I'd build a ship a thousand ton."

A retired shipmaster turned owner, perhaps, like old John Willis and others of his contemporaries.

Whoever and whatever he was, there is no doubt of the popularity of the shanty which celebrates his fame. And its popularity is deserved, for it is one of the finest of all. There is the very thunder and roar of the Westerlies, the hammer strokes of the breaking seas, in its open vowel sounds and sonorous rhythms.

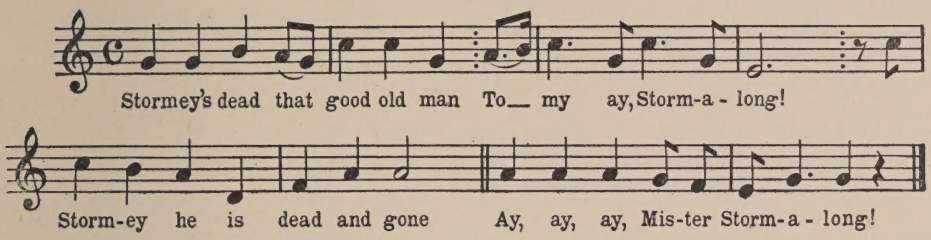
Originally a pumping shanty, when the wooden ships and the constant pumping that was in their time one of the chief parts of the day's work went their way, this, like most of its kind, survived as a capstan or windlass song.

A man once told me how he heard " Old Stormey " actually sung as a pumping shanty, in one of De Wolf's Liverpool ships, the " Blythswood," when she had been dismasted in the Pacific and had to be pumped into port. Someone started up " Stormalong." Out came the Old Man from his cabin foaming at the mouth. " Stop that darned dirge ! " he sang out. " If you can't do without singing, for the love of Mike sing something cheerful ! "

The tune is identical in every collection I have consulted, and the words show little variation.

A word or two on the subject of these converted pumping shanties may not be amiss here. They were not generally used as anchor songs. Many landsmen think a capstan and an anchor song are synonymous : whereas most of these were not generally used as anchor songs. The capstan was frequently used at sea in all sorts of ways—for sheets and halliards, for instance, and on such occasions a song like " Stormalong " or " Lowlands " would probably be requisitioned, especially in the later days when crews got smaller and ships bigger.

STORMALONG



Stormey's dead, that good old man—
To my ay, Stormalong!
Stormey he is dead and gone
Ay, ay, ay, Mister Stormalong!

Stormey's dead and gone to rest—
To my, ay Stormalong!
Of all the skippers he was best—
Ay, ay, ay, Mister Stormalong!

We dug his grave with a silver spade—
To my ay, Stormalong!
His shroud of softest silk was made—
Ay, ay, ay, Mister Stormalong!

I wish I was old Stormey's son—
To my ay, Stormalong!
I'd build a ship a thousand ton—
Ay, ay, ay, Mister Stormalong!

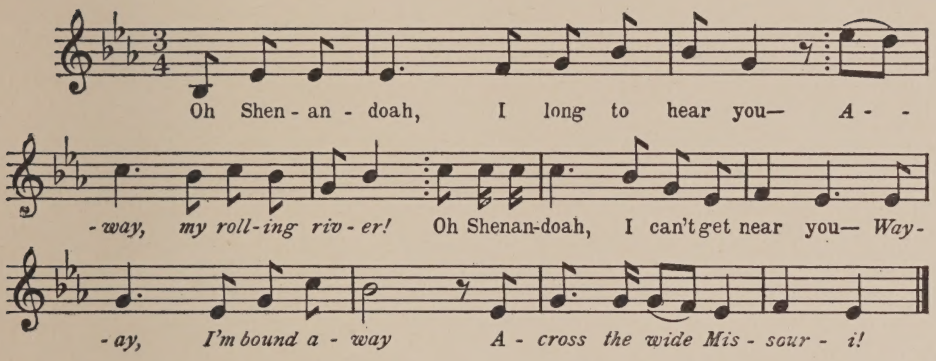
I'd load her deep with wine and rum—
To my ay, Stormalong!
And all my shellbacks should have some—
Ay, ay, ay, Mister Stormalong!

THE WIDE MISSOURI

(CAPSTAN SHANTY)

This, better known, perhaps, as "Shenandoah," or, in shellback fashion, "Shannadore"—was a general favourite before the eighteen-nineties, but it seems to have been heard comparatively seldom after that date. It is a particularly fine tune, and possesses an orthodox set of words which by no means live up to the beauty of the melody: most shantymen, however, seem to have contented themselves with the stereotyped tags—"Oh Shannadore, I long to hear you," and so forth. Whall says it is a shore song turned into a shanty: however that may be, the very soul of the sea seems to speak in it more than in any other shanty I know.

THE WIDE MISSOURI


Oh Shen - an - doah, I long to hear you— A - -
- way, my roll - ing riv - er! Oh Shenan-doah, I can't get near you— Way -
- ay, I'm bound a - way A - cross the wide Mis - sour - i!

Oh Shenandoah, I long to hear you—
Away, my rolling river!
Oh Shenandoah, I can't get near you—
Way—ay, I'm bound away
Across the wide Missouri!

Oh Shenandoah, I love your daughter!
Away, my rolling river!
She lives across the stormy water—
Way—ay, I'm bound away
Across the wide Missouri!

Oh Shenandoah, I've took a notion—
Away, my rolling river!
To sail across the stormy ocean—
Way—ay, I'm bound away
Across the wide Missouri!

Oh Shenandoah, I long to hear you—
Away, my rolling river!
Oh Shenandoah, I can't get near you—
Way—ay, I'm bound away
Across the wide Missouri!

CAN'T YOU DANCE THE POLKA

(CAPSTAN SHANTY)

The words of shanties, as we have already seen, are very often interchangeable. Those I give here are practically identical with those usually sung with the refrain "Heave away, my Johnnie boys, we're all bound to go!" The latter has become rather popular with the modern concert shanty singer, but was never, I think, very general afloat, at any rate in more recent times.

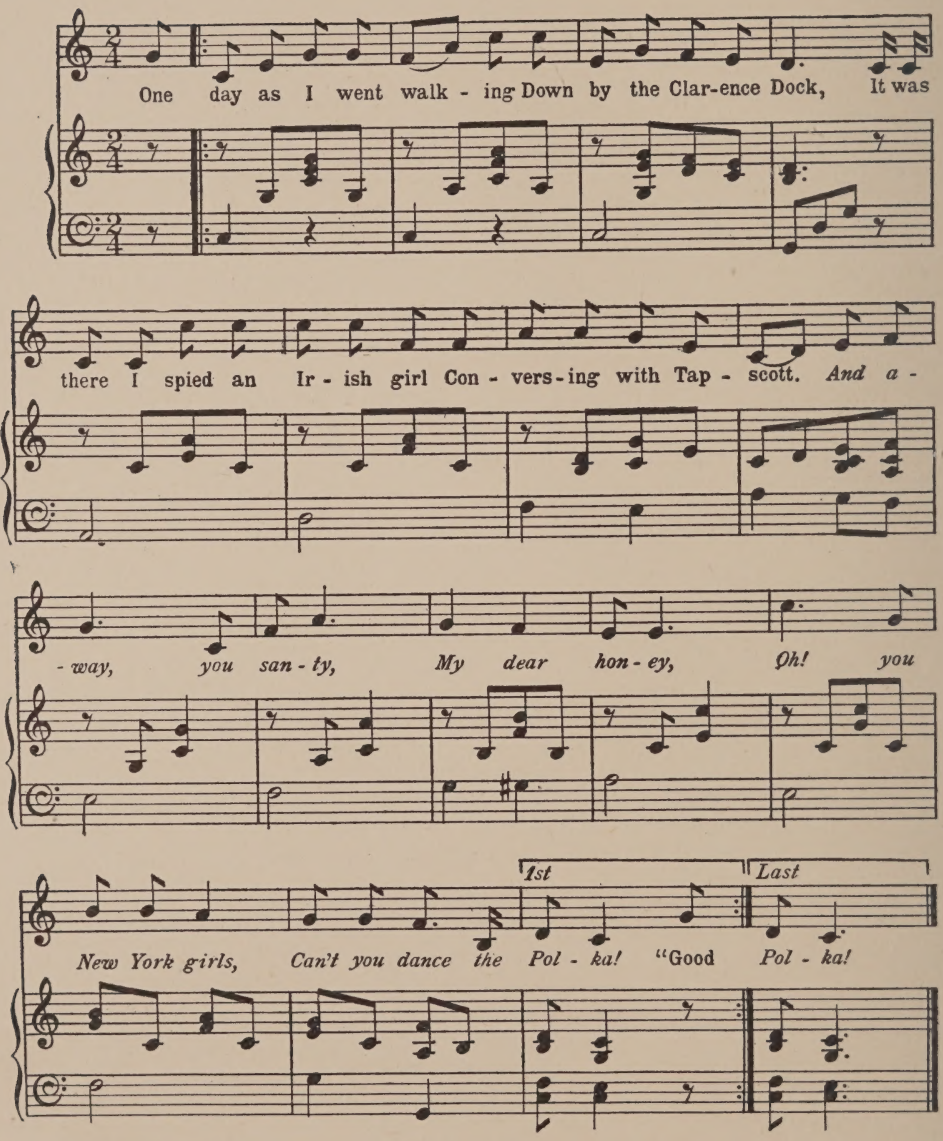
There is another set of words belonging to "Heave away," adapted from the old ballad of "Undaunted Mary" or "The Banks of Sweet Dundee," and beginning:

"It's of a farmer's daughter
So beautiful I'm told,
Her father died and left her
Five hundred pounds in gold,"

which may quite likely have been the original version.

This is, of course, a song of the Liverpool emigrant days. Mr. Tapscott, whose name occurs in several shanties, was the Liverpool agent for some of the American packet companies. The name of the ship varies according to the singer's fancy—sometimes the "Henry Clay" is given, sometimes another—and the name of the dock, too, is not always the same.

CAN'T YOU DANCE THE POLKA


One day as I went walk - ing Down by the Clar-ence Dock, It was
there I spied an Ir - ish girl Con - vers - ing with Tap - scott. And a -
- way, you san - ty, My dear hon - ey, Oh! you
1st
Last
New York girls, Can't you dance the Pol - ka! "Good Pol - ka!

CAN'T YOU DANCE THE POLKA

One day as I went walking
Down by the Clarence Dock,
It was there I spied an Irish girl
Conversing with Tapscott !
And away, you santy,
My dear honey,
Oh ! you New York girls,
Can't you dance the polka !

" Good morning, Mr. Tapscott !
Good morning, Sir," said she,
" And have you got a packet ship
To carry me across the sea ? "

" Oh yes," said Mr. Tapscott,
" I have ships of mighty fame,
And one now in the Waterloo Dock,
And the ' Dreadnought ' is her name."

Oh my flash man is a packet rat,
He sails in the Black Ball Line,
And he's a saucy son of a gun
That will hurt that man of mine.

I went to the Fulton ferry
But I couldn't get across,
So I jumped on the back of a ferryboat man
And rode him like a hoss !
And away, you santy,
My dear honey,
Oh you New York girls,
Can't you dance the polka.

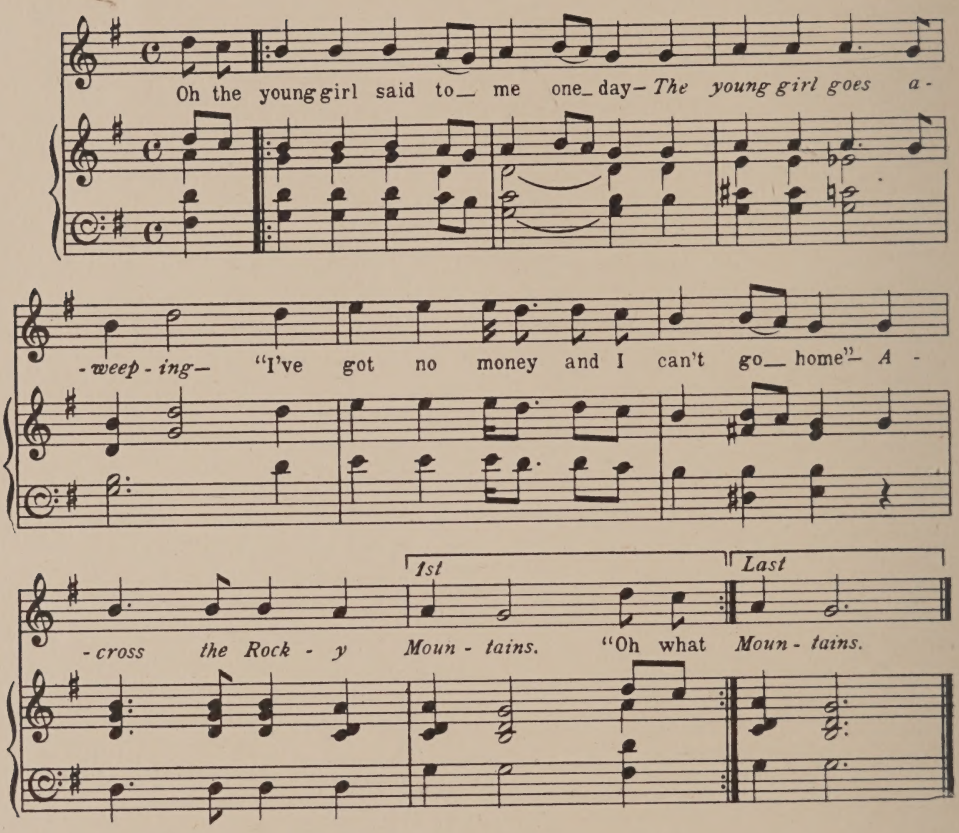
ACROSS THE ROCKIES

(PUMPING SHANTY)

This, like several of the most famous shanties, dates from the days of the American emigrant packets of the eighteen-fifties, and the last stanza of Version Two is only one of many uncomplimentary references to the doubtful reputation for honesty of the Liverpool " packet rats " who manned them —drunken, thriftless and turbulent, but more often than not the most hardy and fearless of seamen.

The first version I think does not appear in any other collection. It was given to me by a friend who heard it sung many a time at the old-fashioned brake pump when he was a midshipman in the Blackwall Line in the early 'fifties, and he described its wonderfully impressive effect heard through the noise of the wind and all the racket of a ship labouring in a seaway : a leaden sky with low clouds overhead, and the great white-crested seas galloping by with thunderous tramplings. This version I should imagine is probably the original. It has the unmistakable " folk-song " air about it, especially the refrain.

ACROSS THE ROCKIES


Oh the young girl said to_ me one_ day– The young girl goes a-
-weep-ing– "I've got no money and I can't go_ home"– A-
1st
Last
-cross the Rock-y Moun-tains. "Oh what Moun-tains.

ACROSS THE ROCKIES

Oh the young girl said to me one day—
The young girl goes a-weeping—
" I've got no money and I can't go home "—
Across the Rocky Mountains.

Oh what shall we poor shellbacks do ?
The young girl goes a-weeping—
We've got no money and we can't go home
Across the Rocky Mountains.

I thought I heard the Old Man say—
The young girl goes a-weeping—
" I've got no money and I can't go home
Across the Rocky Mountains ! "

SECOND VERSION—

Oh the times are hard and the wages low—
Amelia, where you bound to ?
The Rocky Mountains are my home
Across the Western Ocean.

The land of promise there you'll see—
Amelia, where you bound to ?
I'm bound away across the sea
To join the Irish Army.

There's Liverpool Pat with his tall box hat—
Amelia, where you bound to ?
And Yankee John the packet rat—
Across the Western Ocean.

Beware the packet rats, I say—
Amelia, where you bound to ?
They'll steal your money and clothes away
Across the Western Ocean.

LEAVE HER, JOHNNIE

(CAPSTAN SHANTY)

When the packet rat references became out of date, the tune, being too good to be lost, survived with a new set of words as the familiar "Leave her, Johnnie, leave her!" which was generally sung at the capstan, and only at the end of a voyage.

Some writers take the disparaging references to the ship, the Old Man, the mates, the cook, the weather and the rate of pay very seriously. As a matter of fact, this shanty always strikes me as an excellent example of a thorough-going shellback "grouse." A sailorman of the old school was never happier than when he was enjoying a growl with a shipmate at "this sorry scheme of things." But it didn't follow in the least that he wouldn't extol the very ship he was abusing as a sort of floating Eden when she had become his "last ship."

LEAVE HER, JOHNNIE

(*Music as preceding Shanty*).

Oh the times are hard and the wages low—
Leave her, Johnnie, leave her!
And now ashore again we'll go—
It's time for us to leave her?
The grub was bad, the voyage long—
Leave her, Johnnie, leave her?
The seas were high, the gales were strong—
It's time for us to leave her?

She would not wear, she would not stay—
Leave her, Johnnie, leave her?
She shipped it green, both night and day—
It's time for us to leave her?
She would not stay, she would not wear—
Leave her, Johnnie, leave her?
She shipped it green and she made us swear—
It's time for us to leave her?

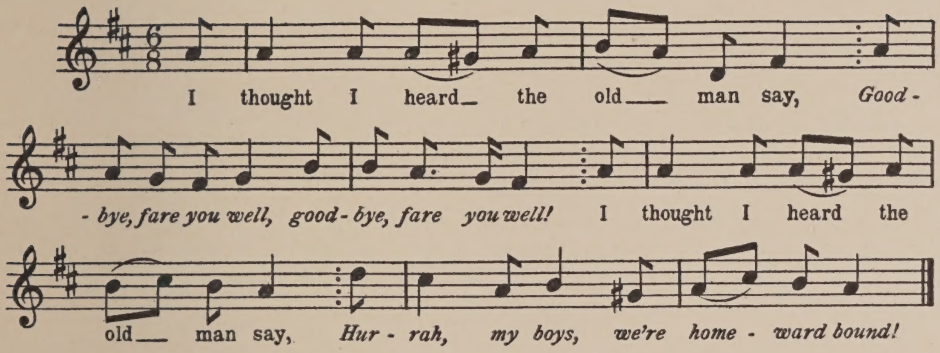
The sails are furled, our work is done—
Leave her, Johnnie, leave her?
And now ashore we'll take a run—
It's time for us to leave her?

FARE YOU WELL

(CAPSTAN SHANTY)

The homeward bound anchor song had for the sailor a sentimental fascination peculiarly its own, and "Good-bye, fare you well," with its wistful, haunting cadence, occupied a high place in his affections until in later years it became to a considerable extent superseded by "Rolling Home."

FARE YOU WELL


I thought I heard the old man say, Good-
- bye, fare you well, good-bye, fare you well! I thought I heard the
old man say, Hur - rah, my boys, we're home - ward bound!

I thought I heard the old man say,
" *Good-bye, fare you well, good-bye, fare you well!* "
I thought I heard the old man say,
" *Hurrah, my boys, we're homeward bound!* "

The anchor is weighed and the sails they are set—
Good-bye, fare you well, good-bye, fare you well!
The girls we are leaving we'll never forget—
Hurrah, my boys, we're homeward bound!

She's a Liverpool clipper and bound for to go—
Good-bye, fare you well, good-bye, fare you well!
With the girls on her towrope she cannot say no—
Hurrah! my boys, we're homeward bound!

ROLLING HOME

(CAPSTAN SHANTY)

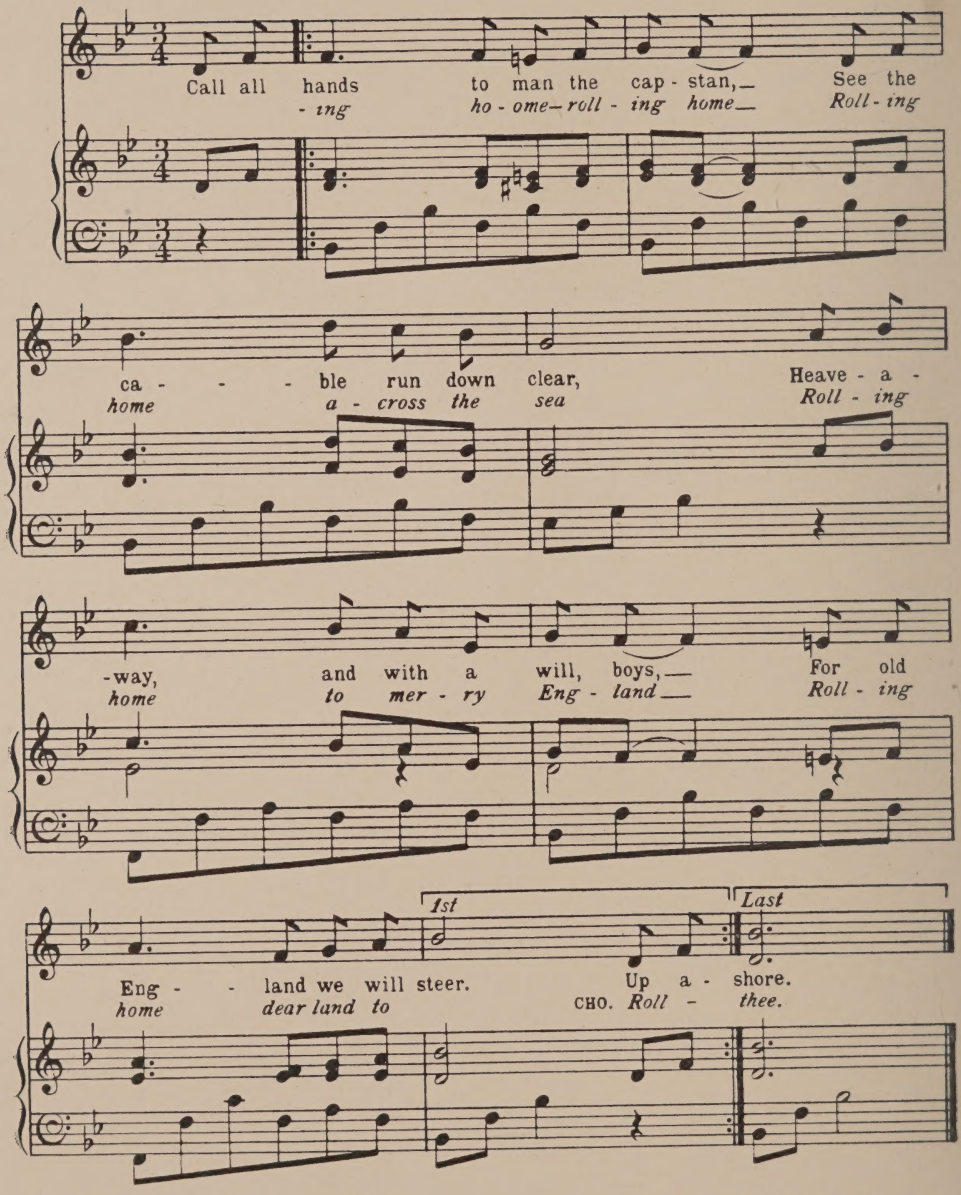
I suppose some people would say that " Rolling Home " is not a shanty at all, but a popular song converted into a shanty. But it was so well-known right up to the end of the windjammer period, and so high a favourite with every shellback —" the best of the blooming lot," I have heard many an old sailorman say of it, with that sentimental affection usually reserved for the " homeward bound " shanty—that no collection would be complete which did not include it. It has, moreover, rather a special interest because it affords an excellent example of the shanty in the making, and the process of its development from the song upon which it was founded.

It was universally known among the later generation of sailormen. Probably no ship sailed from 'Frisco and Australia in the 'eighties and 'nineties whose anchor was not hove short to its strains : and the tune was even played by the bands of warships leaving the Australian station.

Its origin is a bit of a mystery. Whall gives it, but as a song only, not a shanty, and the words and music are both far more elaborate than those usually heard on board ship. I have seen it—also as a song pure and simple—in a popular collection under the title " Rolling Home to Bonnie Scotland," and ascribed so far as the words are concerned to the late Charles Mackay. Again, I have seen it stated that it was composed by Captain " Hurricane " Brown, of the " Flying Cloud." If the " Flying Cloud " referred to is the famous California clipper of that name, it seems far from probable. To begin with, her most celebrated commander was Captain Josiah Creesy, and I can trace no Brown who ever skippered her : but apart from that it is not at all likely that an American would have indulged in the many references to " dear old England " and " merrie England " which appear in all the versions.

The version I give is, I think, that known to most sailormen. It was sung to me by a man who was in sail right up to the finish of the windjammer. His last ship was the " William Mitchell," one of the half-dozen survivors of Britain's age of sail.

ROLLING HOME


Call all hands to man the cap - stan, See the
- ing ho - ome roll - ing home Roll - ing
ca - - - ble run down clear, Heave - a -
home a - cross the sea Roll - ing
-way, and with a will, boys, For old
home to mer - ry Eng - land Roll - ing
1st
Last
Eng - - land we will steer. Up a - shore.
home dear land to CHO. Roll - thee.

ROLLING HOME

Call all hands to man the capstan,
See the cable run down clear,
Heave away, and with a will, boys,
For old England we will steer!

Chorus:

Rolling home, rolling home,
Rolling home across the sea,
Rolling home to merrie England,
Rolling home, dear land, to thee!

Up aloft amidst the rigging
Sings the loud exulting gale,
Straining every spar and backstay,
Every stitch in every sail.

Chorus:

Rolling home, rolling home,
Rolling home across the sea,
Rolling home to dear old England,
Rolling home, dear land, to thee.

Many thousand miles behind us,
Many thousand miles before,
Ancient ocean heaves to waft us
To the well-remembered shore.

Chorus:

Rolling home, rolling home,
Rolling home across the sea,
Rolling home to dear old England,
Rolling home, dear land, to thee!

PADDY DOYLE'S BOOTS

(BUNT SHANTY)

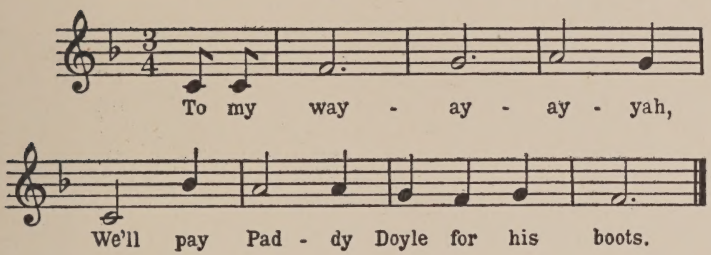
"Paddy Doyle" was consecrated to one occasion, and one alone—namely, getting the bunt—or middle-part—of a large sail, generally a course, but sometimes a topsail, on to the yard. In furling, it may be added, the strongest and most experienced seamen were at the bunt; in reefing the exact contrary was the rule.

When it is remembered that one of these big sails would probably contain about five hundred yards of Number One canvas, it will readily be believed that it took a hefty combined heave to get it, rolled into a solid bundle, on to the yard. The big effort came at the word "Boots," which was shouted rather than sung.

Who Paddy Doyle was and why he was specially associated with boots I have not been able to discover: unless, indeed, he was a euphemism for the Duke of Hell, whose riding boots every old sailor was acquainted with. Opinion seems to be divided as to whether this shanty had a solo part or was an "all hands" affair right through. Bullen and Whall favour the latter view: Patterson, also a practical seaman, says that all hands came in on "Boots." No doubt both opinions are right, and custom varied in individual ships.

The tune bears a striking resemblance to the closing bars of "The Queen's Jig," and may have been picked up from the ship's fiddler.

PADDY DOYLE'S BOOTS



To my way-ay-ay-ah-yah,
We'll pay Paddy Doyle for his boots.

We'll all drink brandy and rum,
And pay Paddy Doyle for his boots.

We'll all shave under the chin,
And pay Paddy Doyle for his boots.

We'll all throw dirt at the cook,
And pay Paddy Doyle for his boots.

THERE GOES ONE

This is, strictly speaking, more of a chant than a shanty. It dates from the eighteen-fifties, and provides an interesting example of the sort of solo recitative used formerly by sailors when performing individual tasks. It is worth noting that the opening phrase—" There goes *one :* "—is that used by captains of bellringers when beginning a peal.

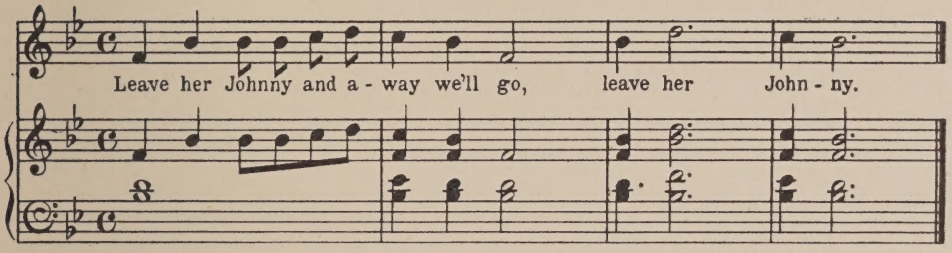
The particular occasion when this chant was used was when stowing cargo, such as saltpetre in bags, which, after it had been placed in the hold, had to be hammered in to obviate any risk of shifting, with heavy wooden mallets known as " commanders."

It was really spoken or intoned rather than sung, with the stress (corresponding to the blows of the mallet) on the italicised words.

There goes *one :*
Hurrah, my boys, strike *one :*
For *one* now is *gone,*
And there's many more to *come*
For to make up the *sum*
Of one hundred so *long* . . . . .(ad. lib.)

HOLYSTONING

The sailor had a song for everything. "When we were holystoning the decks," an old sailor once told me, "we would sing:



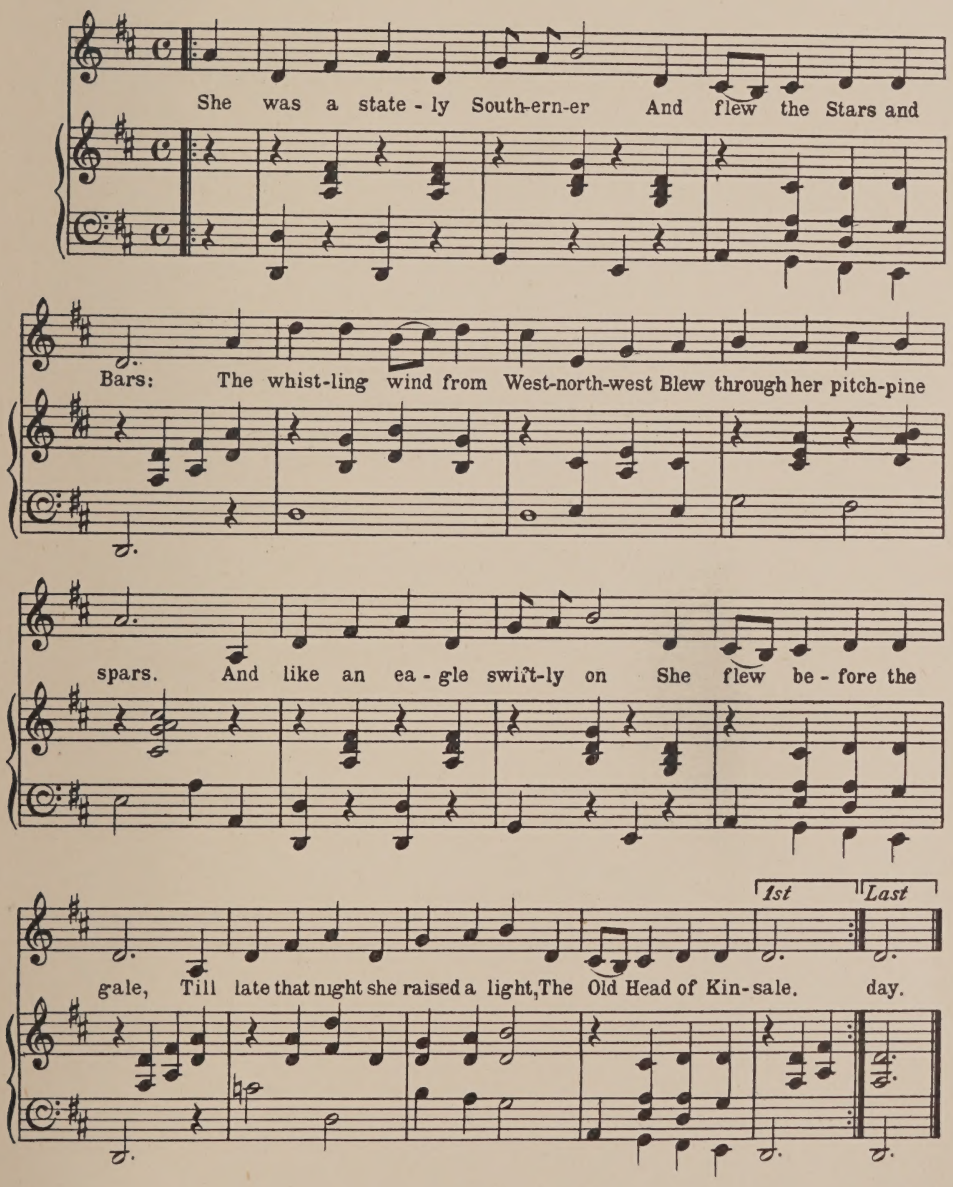
THE STATELY SOUTHERNER

This collection may fitly conclude with an example of the sort of sea song—as distinct from the shanty—the sailorman really liked in his hours of leisure. The kind of thing that passes muster with the average landsman he had no use for, however irreproachable its music might be, however admirable its words from a literary standpoint. As a rule, indeed, the sailor did not sing sea songs : naturally enough, since he got enough of that element in his daily life to like a change now and again. His taste usually ran in the sentimental direction : " Her bright smile haunts me still," for example, was a great favourite with forecastle vocalists.

When he did sing a sea song, it had, above everything else, to be correct—its seamanship like Caesar's wife, its use of technical terms beyond cavil. Cunningham's " A wet sheet and a flowing sea " is ruled out with many seamen because, though it is quite possible that Cunningham used the word " sheet " in its right sense, there is at least a doubt about it. " The Stately Southerner " meets the most critical requirements in this respect, and it is also a jolly good rousing ballad and goes to a stirring tune. It may seem curious that British forecastles should have been so partial to a song which celebrates an exploit of that picturesque renegade, John Paul Jones : probably, if the truth were known, nine times out of ten neither singer nor audience either knew or cared what the song was really about. If they thought about it at all, it is quite likely that (at any rate after the American Civil War) they imagined what the title, " The Stately Southerner," seems to suggest, that the episode belonged to the struggle between North and South, with the latter of whom seafaring sympathy was very strong.

Mr. Prosser, who sang the song for me, could only recall the words of the first two verses, so I have completed it from other sources. It appears without the music in the late Mr. J. E. Patterson's " Sea Anthology," and, with the music, in Miss Joanna Colcord's American collection.

THE STATELY SOUTHERNER


She was a state - ly South-ern-er And flew the Stars and
Bars: The whist-ling wind from West-north-west Blew through her pitch-pine
spars. And like an ea - gle swift-ly on She flew be - fore the
1st
Last
gale, Till late that night she raised a light, The Old Head of Kin-sale. day.

THE STATELY SOUTHERNER

She was a stately Southerner
And flew the Stars and Bars :
The whistling wind from west-north-west
Blew through her pitchpine spars.
And like an eagle swiftly on
She flew before the gale,
Till late that night she raised a light,
The Old Head of Kinsale.

No thought was there of shortening sail
By him who trod the poop,
Though by the weight of her ponderous jib
The boom bent like a hoop.
The groaning chess-trees told the strain
That bore the stout maintack,
But he only laughed as he gazed abaft
At her bright and silvery track.

It was a fine and cloudless night,
The breeze held steady and strong,
As gaily o'er the shining deep
Our good ship bowl'd along :
In foam beneath her trampling bows
The mounting waves did spread,
As stooping low her breast of snow
She buried her lee cathead.

The mid-tide met in the channel waves
That rolled from shore to shore,
The mist lay thick along the land
From Featherstone to Dunmore.
Yet gleamed the light on Tuskar Rock
Where the bell still tolled the hour,
But the beacon light that shone so bright
Was quenched on Waterford Tower.

THE STATELY SOUTHERNER

The canvas that our good ship bore
  Was topsails fore and aft,
Her spanker too and standing jib,
  For she was a stiffish craft.
Then " Lay aloft," the captain cried,
  " Loose out your light sails fast ! "
And to'-gal'n's'ls all and royals small
  Soon swelled upon each mast.

What looms upon the starboard bow ?
  What hangs upon the breeze ?
'Tis time the packet hauls her wind
  Abreast the old Saltees.
For by her mighty press of sail
  That clothed each ponderous spar,
That ship we spied on the misty tide
  Was a British man-of-war.

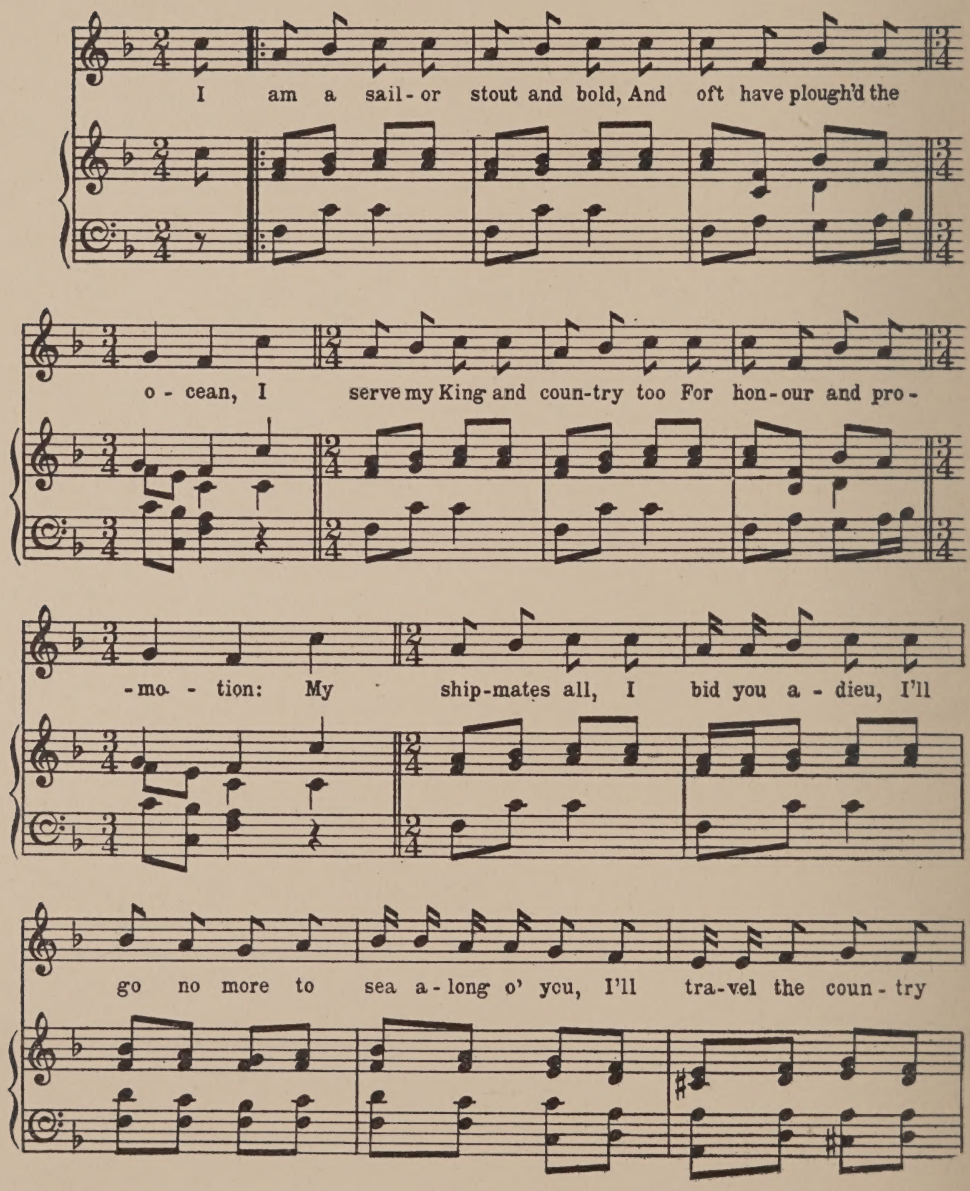
" Out booms ! out booms ! " our skipper cried,
  " Out booms and give her sheet ! "
And the swiftest ship that ever was launched
  Shot away from the British fleet,
As 'midst a murderous hail of shot,
  His stunsails hoisting away,
Down channel clear Paul Jones did steer
  Just at the break of day.

THE RAMBLING SAILOR

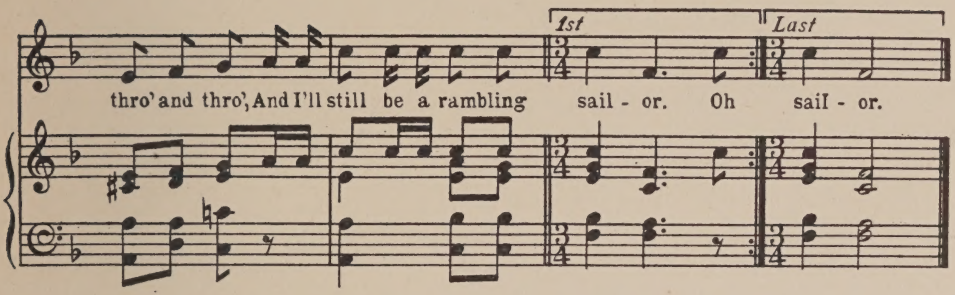
I am not really quite sure whether this song ought to be included in this collection, because I have no direct evidence of its having been sung at sea. I remember it from childhood as part of my father's repertoire on festive occasions; where he got it from I don't know, since it is at any rate unquestionably an old sea song, if not actually a sailor's song, but I am tempted to give it a place here.

Mr. Cecil Sharp has a version in his "Folk Songs from Somerset."

THE RAMBLING SAILOR


I am a sail-or stout and bold, And oft have plough'd the
o-cean, I serve my King and coun-try too For hon-our and pro-
-mo-tion: My ship-mates all, I bid you a-dieu, I'll
go no more to sea a-long o' you, I'll tra-vel the coun-try

THE RAMBLING SAILOR



I am a sailor stout and bold,
And oft have ploughed the ocean,
I serve my King and country too
For honour and promotion :
My shipmates all, I bid you adieu,
I'll go no more to sea along o' you,
I'll travel the country through and through,
And I'll still be a rambling sailor !

And if you want to know my name,
My name it is young Johnson,
I've got a commission from our King
To court all gals is handsome :
With my false heart and flattering tongue,
I courts 'em all both old and young :
I courts 'em all but I marries, marries none,
And I'll still be a rambling sailor !

Oh first I came to Plymouth town,
And there were lassies many,
I boldly stepped unto a one,
To court her for her money.
Says I, " My dear, be of good cheer,
I will not leave you, do not fear,
We'll travel the country far and near,
And I'll still be a rambling sailor."

Oh next I came to Portsmouth town,
And there was lassies plenty,
I boldly stepped unto a one,
To court her for her beauty.
Says I, " My dear, what do you choose ?
Here's ale and wine and rum punch too,
Besides a pair of silk satin shoes,
If you'll travel with a rambling sailor."

Oh then I rose up with the dawn,
Just as the day was peeping,
On tiptoe down the stair I went,
And left my love a-sleeping.
And if she waits until I come,
She may lie there till the day of her doom ;
I'll court some other girl in her room,
And I'll still be a rambling sailor !

Printed by
LOWE & BRYDONE PRINTERS
LTD.
Willesden Junction, N.W.10.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 10019 163 2

SHIP ALLEY

By C. Fox Smith

As the author of 'Sailor Town Days,' 'Sea Songs and Ballads,' and 'A Book of Famous Ships,' C. Fox Smith has achieved a unique place as an interpreter of the sea and of sailor life.

In her new book, 'Ship Alley,' she writes of the streets that may be found in every seaport, great or small, the streets that lead to the sea. Sordid or beautiful, prosperous or tumbled into picturesque decay, these are to every lover of the sea the roads to romance.

From ship alleys of all descriptions the author has gleaned the sketches which are included in this book. Sailors' Inns, Fascination of Charts, The Sea Cook, Figureheads, Ship Models, Laid Up, these few chapter titles suggest the pleasure in store for all readers of 'Ship Alley' who have felt the fascination of the sea.

Illustrated by PHIL W. SMITH

Travel Books

EUROPEAN SKYWAYS

By LOWELL THOMAS

This book, the result of seven months of flying over every mile of the new airways of Europe, will be enjoyed not only by those who love true stories of adventure but by the thousands of people who are planning to visit Europe and who wish definite information on European passenger airlines.

TAWNY SPAIN

By H. C. CHATFIELD-TAYLOR

A delightful interpretation of present-day Spain, with illustrations from etchings by Ada G. Williamson.

ENCOUNTERS

With All Sorts of People Including Myself

By B. IFOR EVANS

A brilliant survey of the most interesting corners and characters of the present-day world.

FROM CORSAIR TO RIFFIAN

By ISABEL ANDERSON

Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco described for the traveler or the stay-at-home reader.

THE VALLEY OF ARNO

By EDWARD HUTTON

The art, scenery, and life of this interesting region of Italy vividly and authoritatively described.

IN SAVAGE AUSTRALIA

By KNUT DAHL

Thrilling adventures among the savages of northwestern Australia.

CHINESE CENTRAL ASIA

By C. P. SKRINE

The geography and peoples of one of the most remote parts of the world.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY